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S African white dies in detention

A young white trade unionist has been found hanged in his cell at security police headquarters in Johannesburg. Dr Neil Aggett, detained in a round-up of political activists, is the first white among the 46 people who have died in security police custody since 1963.

Segregate fans, says minister

Mr Neil Macfarlane, the Minister for Sport, has told Spain of the need to segregate British football fans from the supporters of other teams playing in the World Cup. The Spaniards were now aware of the problems of "our so-called football fans".

Soviet general expelled by US

General Vasily Chitov, the senior military officer at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, has been expelled for activities inconsistent with his diplomatic status. He was said to have been found in possession of incriminating documents. Norway has also expelled two Soviet diplomats.

SDP denounced as 'weasels'

The SDP decision to vote for Mr Norman Tebbit's Employment Bill was denounced by Labour leaders and one of the party's own MPs, Mr Denis Healey, dubbed the SDP "Tebbit's Troopers" and said its leaders were acting like "weasels in a sack".

Easy victory for Herr Schmidt

Herr Helmut Schmidt, the West German Chancellor, seeking a confirmation of his domestic and foreign policies, easily won a vote of confidence in the Bundestag. Deputies of the two coalition parties gave unanimous backing to the motion, carried by a majority of 43.

Indian father is deported

The Indian husband of a young Asian woman from Birmingham who recently gave birth was sent back to India because of the new law on foreign husbands. The case is being used in a campaign against the immigration rules.

Shells greet Carrington

Two Vietnamese shells landed in a Cambodian refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border less than an hour before Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, arrived. Lord Carrington, who is visiting Thailand saw food being distributed to some 13,000 Cambodian women.

Toxteth pledge

Mr Kenneth Oxford, Chief Constable of Merseyside, denied that he was about to abandon the community policing experiment in Toxteth because of attacks on officers. Despite difficulties, his men were determined to see the system work.

Vauxhall stars

Vauxhall, General Motors' United Kingdom subsidiary, sold 14,393 cars last month, more than at any time since June 1978. The Cavalier was third best seller, and the Astra sixth.

Golden girls

Jane Croft, aged 18, of Wigan, won two gold medals and Jackie Wilfott, aged 16, of Southend, one gold medal in the freestyle events on the first day of the Arena international swimming meeting in Paris.

Features, page 6

Sir Harold Wilson pays a personal tribute to Queen Elizabeth II. Will the Liberals walk off with the alliance spoils? a small matter of the chessboard.

Leader page 7

Letters: On funding universities, from Professor C. A. Pascoak and Professor G. J. Huxley; Laker, from Mr Martin Drew; West End theatres, from Mr Paul Eddington; Leading articles: Laker; Manpower Services Commission; sex shops.

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Laker Airways collapses with debts of £270m

Whitehall reveals curbs on Poland

By Simon Scott Plummer

Britain announced yesterday measures against Poland and the Soviet Union to mark its disapproval of the military takeover in Poland. They include travel restrictions on Polish and Soviet officials in Britain and tighter terms for credit.

Britain is the first European NATO country to give details of its reaction to the imposition of martial law in Poland. Its allies, apart from Greece, which has disassociated itself from such a course, are expected to follow suit over the next few days.

The measures against Poland include:

Travel by Polish diplomats, officials and journalists restricted to within 25 miles of London and Glasgow, where there is a Polish Consulate; Government-backed credits for Poland suspended as is Poland's official debt; Officially guaranteed credits to Poland go into abeyance, subject to safeguarding the interests of British firms with contractual obligations.

Britain and its EEC partners have agreed to stop sales of cut-price food to Poland. BBC Polish-language broadcasts will be increased by five hours a week to 264 hours.

The restrictions applied to the Soviet Union are:

A reduction from 35 to 25 miles in the distance Soviet officials can travel outside London without special permission; A reduction in activity under Anglo-Soviet technical cooperation agreements, covering medicine and public health, environmental protection, agricultural research, atomic energy.

In all, Laker had a fleet of 16 aircraft and employed 2,600 people.

Midland Bank Group is expected to be one of the worst sufferers from Laker's collapse. Its subsidiary, Clydesdale Bank, may lose up to £25m, according to City sources.

Bankers said Laker's losses were running at £15m to £20m a year. It owes banks £230m with a further £40m owed to unsecured creditors. Assets were estimated at about £250m.

The airline industry was warned against "crocodile tears" yesterday as its leaders publicly behaved and privately rejoiced over Laker's collapse. Bankruptcy among airlines has been seen for months as the quickest and most direct way to get rid of overcapacity on the Atlantic routes.

There was personal sympathy for Sir Freddie and his staff, but there was also an immediate and not entirely disinterested rush of practical help for the airline's stranded passengers. Laker has been carrying about a quarter of the passengers travelling between Britain and New York, and the airline got another way to pick up its customers.

Air Florida, Laker's arch-rival, said: "It is tragic because Laker was a fine airline. But there is going to be a lot of traffic out there to be picked up, and in that sense it is good."

Unions fear MSC job losses

By David Felton, Labour Reporter

Lord McCarthy is cautiously beginning work in his Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service-sponsored inquiry into the rail pay dispute without the participation of the striking train drivers.

Ascas officials who are providing a secretariat for the McCarthy inquiry disclosed yesterday that the chairman and his two colleagues, Mr George Doughy, the former engineering white-collar union leader, and Mr Ted Chappell, ex-managing director of Esso, will examine all the documentary evidence on the disputed rail pay issue.

After three days of fruitless attempts to involve leaders of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (Aslef) the three-man investigation team will spend this weekend going through preparatory paper work. There is a prospect the rail verdict will be given next week, even if the four-plateau continue their boycott.

Mr Clifford Rose, British Railways Board member for industrial relations and himself a member of the Ascas governing council, said last night: "I think the committee can go ahead without Aslef, and there could be a chance of solving the issue. But I would welcome it if they (the train drivers) would participate".

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Lord McCarthy weighs up rail case without Aslef

By Paul Routledge, Labour Editor

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End of a dream: Sir Freddie Laker's aircraft grounded at Gatwick Airport yesterday.

Passengers stranded at British airports

By Nicholas Timmins and John Witherow

A Laker Airbus flight from Manchester to Tenerife was turned back an hour-and-a-half out over the Bay of Biscay yesterday, as news of the company's crash came through. The 311 package holiday-makers on board were brought back to Manchester.

A second Laker flight, a DC10 scheduled Skyrain to Miami, due to leave at 10.00 am, was halted after its 151 passengers had boarded, stranding them and others due to be picked up at Prestwick.

About 300 people were booked on cancelled Skyrains from Gatwick to Los Angeles, New York and Miami yesterday. Behind the Laker counter, where the beleaguered staff fended off interminable questions from confused and occasionally angry passengers, the airline proudly displayed its cheap fares of £90 to New York and £109 to Miami.

Some of the scheduled passengers to the United States were taken to Heathrow, and flown by PanAm and Air Florida to their destinations. But many will have to pay for an extra fare, and then hope to recover their money at a later stage.

A PanAm spokesman said:

McDonnell Douglas may quit civil aviation

By Edward Townsend, Industrial Correspondent

McDonnell Douglas, the big United States aircraft manufacturer which stands to lose up to \$50m (£26m) after the Laker collapse, could become the second of the world's four major plane makers to abandon civil aircraft production.

Such a move, which has been widely expected within the aviation industry since Lockheed's decision in December to end TriStar production, was made even more likely with the sudden announcement by McDonnell yesterday that it had pulled out of its partnership with Fokker, of Holland, to develop the MD-100, a new 150-seater airliner for the late 1980s.

McDonnell put a brave face on the latest developments. Mr Ray Daffy, the company's United States spokesman, said: "We are not considering pulling out of the commercial aircraft business". In Britain, an official said the MD-100 decision was not connected with the Laker affair and added that McDonnell would continue design work on a 150-seater airliner and would be talking to potential partners.

But there must be considerable doubt about McDonnell's future presence in the civil air-

Freed Briton talks to 'The Times'

Pyke's ordeal in Iran jails

By Mario Modiano in Athens and David Cross in London

Mr Andrew Pyke, the British businessman who had spent longer in captivity in Iran than the American hostages, arrived in Athens yesterday to be re-united with his Dutch wife, Ursula. "I'm feeling great again," he said. "It's nice to see the world again".

Mr Pyke, aged 42, who was released from jail just over a week ago and spent the past few days waiting in the Swedish Embassy in Tehran for his exit papers to be cleared, arrived on a regular Iranian flight looking fit in a dark blue jacket and corduroy trousers. British Embassy officials took him to an uninclosed dormitory where he and his wife, for the first time in privacy, since he was arrested about 17 months ago.

He had originally planned to continue his journey home yesterday but because his flight was delayed by a couple of hours he and his wife decided to spend the night in Athens.

Speaking to *The Times* in London on telephone before he left the Iranian capital, he described in detail his sudden release from prison and the reasons behind it.

It all happened very quickly in the end, he said. The first sign that his release might be imminent came when he was transferred from Karaj prison, about 25 miles outside Tehran, to the notorious Evin prison in the centre of the capital on about January 19.

Then on the Saturday of that week (January 23) he was called before an examining judge for an informal hearing on his case. Four days later he agreed to make a video tape either for the Iranian authorities' files or for local broadcast. (He was not completely sure how the recording would be used). Then a day later he was handed over to the custody of the Swedish Embassy, which looks after British interests in Iran.

Asked about the video recording, Mr Pyke said that

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NEWS IN SUMMARY

Navigation aids for submarines

Britain's four Polaris missile submarines are being fitted with new navigation systems to improve their reliability and make them cheaper to maintain (Henry Stanhope writes). The decision, which will cost millions of pounds, was taken in part to capitalise on advances in computer technology since the craft were built in the mid-1960s. It was also prompted by the need to make the submarines as reliable as possible after Polaris has been phased out of the United States Navy.

DHSS attacked over ruling

The Department of Health and Social Security was accused yesterday of trying to sabotage a £14,000 local authority campaign to encourage people to claim social security benefits (Pat Healy writes).

The department has ruled that people returning a postcard claim form being distributed by Birmingham social services will be required to make a separate claim to their local benefits office.

Tomato thrower is suspended

Mark Bianco, aged 22, a science student, was suspended from Sussex University until the end of term by an internal disciplinary panel yesterday for throwing tomatoes at Dr David Owen, the Social Democrat MP, during a speech he gave on the campus last November. Disciplinary proceedings against Julian Allott and Joanne Millan, both students, were deferred.

29 arrests in N Ireland

Police and troops detained 29 people in Northern Ireland yesterday in a security round-up concentrated in Co Armagh and East Tyrone (our Belfast Correspondent writes).

A soldier and two civilians were seriously hurt yesterday when a suspected stolen car was chased by an Army patrol into the grounds of Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital.

Sullom Voe oil strike called off

A planned strike at the Sullom Voe oil terminal, in the Shetland Islands, was called off yesterday morning just before 210 shift workers were due to close the plant.

A mass meeting of the men reversed a decision to strike over a 15 per cent pay claim and accepted shop stewards' advice to continue normal working. BP has agreed to meet Mr Mel Keenan, of the transport workers, for further talks.

Society backs fellow lawyer

The Society of Black Lawyers last night gave their backing to Mr Sieghat Kadri, the lawyer who clashed with Judge Lord Dunby in the trial of a young black man acquitted last week of assault on the police during the Boston riots. After the judge praised the police for their "manly restraint" in causing only relatively minor injuries to the youth. The judge also criticised Mr Kadri's conduct of the defence.

Protection for Bulldog

The Football Association was granted a High Court injunction yesterday banning the unlicensed use of its "Bulldog Bobby" World Cup emblem on T-shirts marketed by Robland Graphics, of Heysham, Lancashire. Mr Justice Walton, sitting in London, said of the emblem: "It looks like Dracula on the Chelsea terrace".

Railman charged

Sydney Edwards, a railman, was yesterday remanded on bail until March 8 when he appeared before Tower Bridge magistrates facing charges connected with overtime and time sheets. Mr Edwards, aged 58, of Sandown Road, Newwood, south east London, is alleged to have committed the offence at London Bridge station.

Advanced research centre for BL.

As part of its policy to improve overall efficiency, BL transferred production of ears out of its manufacturing plant at Canley, Coventry.

But instead of selling the plant, the company has invested £16 million to turn it into a highly advanced

research centre.

The new centre already planned for the next decade will benefit enormously from the kind of advanced research that the new development will offer.

BL engineers will be able, for instance, to test

individual components at the design stage in a totally controlled laboratory environment where they will be able to simulate a wide range of different driving situations.

BL Fighting back

Safety plea after fire kills seven

A coroner called for significant improvements in hospital safety yesterday after hearing how a fire killed seven old men.

Mr Paul Knappman, the Westminster Coroner, said wards should have smoke detectors, two nurses should be on duty all times and night duty nurses should not be separated from patients by glass screens.

He had been told that when fire broke out at Warlingham Park psychiatric hospital, at Caterham, Surrey, it went unnoticed by a duty nurse. There were no smoke detectors in the ward; and a second duty nurse was out of the ward on a meal break. A patient's screams were the first indication to staff that there was a fire.

The seven patients, aged between 75 and 85, died from breathing smoke and from shock. A verdict of accidental death was recorded on each.

The inquest was told that a £20,000 fire safety programme had been recommended five months before the fire, but had fallen victim to spending cuts.

Dr Knappman said a cheap smoke detector would be better than nothing. If that was impossible an independent warning system would have to be installed.

Mr Leonard Ani Adjji, who was in charge of the ward at the time, said he was alerted by one of the patients screaming "fire". He said a bed was in the way of the nearest fire alarm so he went to the corridor and telephoned the hospital switchboard.

Catering at Commons in the black after grant

By Anthony Bevins, Political Correspondent

The House of Commons Catering Department yesterday announced a net trading profit of £265,843 for the financial year 1980-81.

Trading accounts signed by Mr Charles Irving, Conservative MP for Cheltenham and chairman of the Commons catering sub-committee, and Mr John Smillie, head of the Refreshment Department, declared that a 20 per cent net trading profit on turnover had been achieved in the first year of operation under new administrative arrangements.

Nowhere in the accounts is it mentioned that the Treasury, as part of the new administrative arrangements, had paid over £1,426,612 to the House of Commons Commission for the presentation of the wages bill for the Refreshment Department's

permanent staff. Without such direct assistance, the department would undoubtedly have achieved an even bigger deficit than the £767,863 recorded for 1979-80, or the £546,292 of 1978-79.

Mr Smillie said yesterday: "You cannot compare the new structure with the old. You must look at Commons catering as you would look at any industrial canteen which is subsidized."

Revised meal prices have been fixed since July, 1980, and, the report says, in some cases there have been decreases in prices, most notably on afternoon tea on the terrace, which were found to be too expensive.

The budget balance has also been drastically changed by the Treasury intervention.

As part of its policy to improve overall efficiency, BL transferred production of ears out of its manufacturing plant at Canley, Coventry.

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research centre. The new centre already planned for the next decade will benefit enormously from the kind of advanced research that the new development will offer.

BL Fighting back

Outcry as father is sent home

By Lucy Hodges

A man whose wife recently gave birth to a child in Birmingham was sent back to India yesterday because of the Government's new rules on foreign husbands.

The case of Mr and Mrs Jaswan Singh Mann, one of a number being collected by pressure groups to show that new immigration rules are splitting up families. It is one of about 16 cases lodged with the European Commission of Human Rights complaining that the rules discriminate against people on grounds of their race and sex.

A campaign is to be launched soon by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and the National Council for Civil Liberties to draw public attention to what they see as a scandal.

Mrs Mann came to live here with her family in 1964, when she was nine months old. She was brought up in Birmingham and returned to India for the first time last year, when her family arranged her marriage. She was refused permission to bring her husband here because neither she nor her parents were born here, but she returned to Britain because she could not adapt to life in India.

When she arrived she realized she was pregnant. Her husband was allowed to visit her for the birth of their child last May.

Mr Timothy Rees, Minister of State at the Home Office, made clear that he could not stay.

Mr Leonard Ani Adjji, who was in charge of the ward at the time, said he was alerted by one of the patients screaming "fire". He said a bed was in the way of the nearest fire alarm so he went to the corridor and telephoned the hospital switchboard.

Both brothers of Fleetwood House, Northfield, Birmingham, admitted living on the immobile earnings of prostitutes. Both were cleared of two further joint charges of kidnapping.

A murderer who throttled a girl with her gold crucifix chain and raped her was jailed for life yesterday. Robert Hodgeson, aged 30, killed Teresa de Simone, a part-time barmaid, in his flat in a car parked behind a public house in Solihull where she worked.

A detective involved in a controversy over the handing of a rape complaint is being switched to uniform duties (our Northampton Correspondent writes). Mr Derek Tebbitt, Secretary of State for Employment, on Thursday.

Mr Eric Varley, the shadow Employment Secretary, yesterday summed up the critics' fears when he remarked that the MSC's appointment was blarney political. "Obviously, the Government have got very tired of the scathing reports from the MSC and they probably want to turn it into Mr Tebbitt's puppet", Mr Varley said.

Mr Young, who was introduced into Whitehall backroom services by Sir Keith Joseph, in 1979, could take some time to recover from the political impression that he is a close ally of the Conservative right.

A man aged 43 was bound over, in the sum of £250, by magistrates at Arundel, West Sussex, yesterday, after police withdrew a charge of indecent assault on a girl aged 13 to spare her giving evidence at a Crown Court trial.

Mr Derek Sangster, chairman of Worthing Community Standards Association, later criticized the decision, which he said he would raise with the Attorney General.

A police spokesman said the police and court believed that because of the relatively minor nature of the alleged assault justice would be best served in the action taken.

The Queen's bitter-sweet anniversary

The Queen will today spend the thirtieth anniversary of her accession to the throne quietly with the Duke of Edinburgh at Sandringham House, Norfolk. No festivities are planned. A Buckingham Palace spokesman said: "It is rather a sad occasion in that this is the day her father died and naturally, not one for celebration."

The Queen was on tour in East Africa

when King George VI died at Sandringham after a day's shooting. The rest of the year was cancelled and the Queen flew back to London to take on the duties of monarchy.

The Queen, who has been at Sandringham, where the photograph was taken, is to return to Buckingham Palace on Monday.

Wilson tribute, page 7

Rapist is given 12 life terms

From Our Correspondent, Liverpool

A man who raped six women in a series of attacks over 10 months was sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday.

Lionel Newbon, aged 24, forced his victims to submit at knifepoint. He raped a mother while her son aged two clung to her neck, and in another attack, his victim, aged 69, climbed to the roof of her house to escape after the offence.

Newbon, an unemployed labourer of no fixed address, appeared at Wimborne Crown Court for sentence. The court heard details of the offences last December, when the hearing was adjourned for reports. Newbon admitted six rapes, six robberies and stealing a car.

A man who subjected two teenage girls to serious sexual indignities had one of his convictions for attempted rape quashed by the Court of Appeal yesterday because of the foreman of the jury at his trial failed to declare how many of the jurors分歧ed on another riot situation are quite erroneous.

Since community policing began three weeks ago, officers on foot patrol have been ambushed and stoned by gangs of youths. There was trouble on three consecutive nights.

Six officers were injured on Thursday night and seven on Friday night, when the photograph appeared in newspapers, was jailed for 12 months at the Central Criminal Court yesterday for causing £2,000 damage to a police coach and causing bodily harm to the driver.

Two policemen were attacked in Upper Pitt Street by a gang of about forty hooded youths who battered

them with iron bars and wooden sticks. The constables were kicked and punched on the ground before the youths fled.

In a second incident on Thursday night four policemen were attacked after being surrounded by a gang of youths.

Mr Wayne Davies, a member of the city's Community Relations Council, said yesterday that unless local politicians took notice of problems over bad housing and unemployment for black people, street fighting would break out again in Toxteth before Easter.

He was responding to suggestions that violent assaults on police in Toxteth this week, particularly on Thursday night, might force him to reconsider his experiment.

Speaking to his police committee, Mr Oxford said: "I want to refute statements attributed to Merseyside police and the Police Federation that the bear plan in Toxteth is going to fail". He said that excited reports of latest outbreaks of trouble had led to a misrepresentation of the facts, and added: "Reports that we are on the edge of another riot situation are quite erroneous."

Stephen Pigg, aged 26, unemployed, of Burmarrad Close, Redcar, Cleveland, was jailed for five years at York Crown Court last year on two charges of attempted rape. He was given 12 months, to run concurrently, for unlawful sexual intercourse and indecent assault. His sentence remains the same because he was unanimously convicted on the other charge of attempted rape.

A man who forced young girls to work as prostitutes failed for 18 years yesterday at Birmingham Crown Court after being found guilty on four charges of rape. Norris Hall, aged 31, had also been found guilty, with his brother, Gifford Hall, aged 30, on four joint charges of kidnapping. Gifford Hall is to be sentenced on Monday.

Both brothers of Fleetwood House, Northfield, Birmingham, admitted living on the immobile earnings of prostitutes. Both were cleared of two further joint charges of kidnapping.

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Mr Young's visit to Japan, sponsored by the Department of Industry, where he now serves as a special adviser to the Secretary of State, will give him an opportunity to learn the Japanese lesson in both manufacturing and training. He will also be scouting for possible further investment from Japan, after his personal coup last year in getting Sanyo to take over a

Some police chiefs second rate, Tory says

By Anthony Bevins
Political Correspondent

A Conservative MP said last night that some chief constables were second rate and not fit for the job they had been given.

Mr Enoch Griffiths, MP for Bury St Edmunds and an adviser to the Police Federation, told a constituency party meeting that the Home Secretary needed to give the Royal Whitehall police department a sharp "kick" and that the training of police chief constables was badly in need of reform.

There were strong chief constables, but there were also second-rate ones who cannot stand criticism, who surround themselves with toadies; who do not read enough; whose temperament and training no longer fit them to carry the heavy tasks or to handle the social complexities of late twentieth-century Britain.

It is known at Westminster that Mr Whitelaw has expressed doubts about the ability of some chief constables to cope with crises.

Mr Griffiths said that Whitehall and Westminster were beginning to recognise that only the recruitment of a force of a score or more urban chief constables could revitalise the running of the inner cities and ultimately the security of the state itself against terrorism.

Of the Home Office police department he said it had too often shown itself to be sluggish, indecisive, and out of touch with the realities of policing violence.

Conservatives are among members of both Houses opposing Mr William Whitelaw, Home Secretary, by seeking to change the Government's Criminal Justice Bill, now in committee, with the aim of further reducing the time served by prisoners (Peter Evans writes).

Mr Whitelaw originally intended automatic parole for serving offenders, but the effects were so disastrous that he changed his mind. Instead the Bill would introduce partly suspended sentences.

Mr Whitelaw's change of heart after a tough reception for his policies at the Conservatives' annual conference alarmed many in the prison service.

Now the Parliamentary All Party Penal Affairs Group, which has about thirty Conservatives among its 80 members, is seeking to change the Bill.

COPYRIGHT JUDGMENT DELAYED

Mr Basil Ashmole, a stage director, will have to wait to hear the result of his copyright damages action against Mr William Douglas-Hamilton, chairman of the city's Community Relations Council, said yesterday that unless local politicians take notice of the problems over bad housing and unemployment for black people, street fighting would break out again in Toxteth before Easter.

The need to prove the vaccine's long-term safety means it will be some years before it is used as a preventive measure. In the meantime, those affected will have to bootstrap common much more quickly if Dr Conville's results are confirmed and lasting, Dr Rees said.

The first human studies of the vaccine will start this year on healthy volunteers in Britain, Norway and the United States. A skin conversion test, similar to that used for tuberculosis, will measure its effectiveness.

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Armadillo
helps in
war on
leprosy

'The day Freddie Laker stops flying aeroplanes, the fares will go up and up...'

Travel now

Operators ready for payouts as flights switch

By Derek Harris, Commercial Editor

Package holiday tour operators using Laker flights and travel agents selling Laker package holidays scrambled yesterday to cope with the immediate problems thrown up by the Laker collapse. However, longer-term, higher price transatlantic holidays are foreseen.

Thomson Holidays, Britain's largest tour operator, is footing the bill for switching 13 of their holidaymakers to a British Airways flight today in club class after their Laker flight to Montego Bay, Jamaica, via Miami, was halted at Manchester yesterday as it was about to take off.

Thomas Cook, the travel agency chain, was preparing if necessary to pay out substantial sums under its 24-hour money back guarantee to those who had booked package holidays through Cooks from Laker's package holiday subsidiaries, Laker Air Travel and the North West-based Arrowsmith.

Thomson was last night still making alternative arrangements for other groups due out this weekend on Laker flights from Manchester, Gatwick and Prestwick to United States and Caribbean destinations. With the under-used capacity now existing on the North Atlantic services, once the immediate difficulties are over, there should be few problems in finding seats with other air-lines.

Holidaymakers who had booked Laker package tours will get their money back under bonding arrangements with the travel industry. This is not an immediate payment, but some other travel agents in addition to Cooks give no-strings guarantees.

If the Receiver shuts down Laker package holidays, the package operators and agents will also offer alternative holidays.

Cosmos, another big tour operator, said last night it did not anticipate great difficulties in switching to other airlines to cope with Laker-booked travellers on its own package holidays. It is also increasing its allocation of beds in hotels at destinations used by the Laker holidays subsidiaries.

There are about 4,500 holiday makers abroad on Laker package holidays. The bonding arrangements administered by the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) allow for immediate payments, if necessary, for package holiday customers likely to be stranded. But there were fears in the industry last night that

Countdown to collapse

Why the banks acted

By Peter Wilson-Smith, Banking Correspondent

By a strange twist of fate, the decision finally to call in the receiver to Sir Freddie Laker's cut-price airline has come in the very week when agreement on a rescue package seemed closer than ever.

On Monday morning, Sir Freddie's bankers and advisers were increasingly confident that the negotiations could be tied up within a week or so and the matter then be handed over to the lawyers to draw up the final documents. Next day Sir Freddie was telling the world that he was flying high and his financial problems were over.

His bankers reacted with predictable caution, describing his comments as premature. But it was not until later in the week that the bad news emerged which finally sunk Laker.

New figures showing worse-than-expected ticket sales, combined with disappointing forecasts for cash flow in the months ahead, were the final screw. The whole basis of the rescue package worked out over six months of intense negotiations involving the Bank of England and Laker's own advisers Samuel Montagu, depended on sufficient cash being available for Laker to keep trading during the difficult winter months.

The gloomy news on Laker's trading position which surfaced this week meant that no one could be confident that Laker would be able to go on paying his bills, even though there had been considerable progress on sorting out the fundamental balance sheet problems.

It was this shortage of cash which precipitated the appointment of accountants Ernst and Whitney as receivers yesterday morning. The previous day, Thursday, Laker's advisers Samuel Montagu had further

talks with the Civil Aviation Authority, the body which licenses British airlines and acts as custodian of the public interest. The CAA had been kept closely in touch with developments and was happy to continue Laker's licence if the banks believed the airline could survive both in the months ahead and through the summer.

At the back of everyone's mind, however, was the demise of Courtline in 1974, when passengers were left stranded throughout the world. It was mistakes given the latter developments that the CAA could not risk allowing Laker to continue trading—a decision with which Sir Freddie himself strongly disagreed. However, City sources believe Laker probably needed a further £5m to £10m to see him through to the summer, and even then it is uncertain whether the CAA would have been happy to continue the licence.

Even late on Thursday the irresponsible Sir Freddie was still trying to save his airline. He was closest till the early hours of Friday in the Gatwick Hilton with his advisers and Mr Harry Goodman of the holiday firm Intasun in a last-ditch rescue attempt. But although Intasun may try to buy Laker's holiday business from the receiver, any thought of rescuing Laker seems to

What Laker owes the banks

	Term loans	Oversight
Midland Bank syndicate	£70m	—
Eximbank syndicate	£121m	—
Japanese bank syndicate	£30m	—
Clydesdale Bank	—	£9m
Total		£230m

Aircraft along the Laker air-lanes:

above, the Halton (converted RAF Halifax), 1947

The Carvair, converted DC4 by Aviation Traders, Laker's Southend engineers, for cross-Channel traffic

in

Dauntless champion of the cut-price traveller

The airline buccaneer

By Alan Hamilton

Sir Freddie Laker was in expensively confident mood. It was May 1979 and he was in Toulouse, showing visitors over the Airbus Industrie production line where the first order for 10 wide-bodied jets was taking shape.

When an eager journalist in the party inquired did Sir Freddie plan to make his first commercial flight in it?

"Let's see," the recently knighted Sir Freddie mused, "I'd like to spend Christmas on my yacht in Majorca, to let's say well, dry land on the Saturday before Christmas, 1980. We'll take off at half past ten in the morning if that suits my pilot and you're all invited. Is that all right with you?" he asked of the assembled Airbus executives, who nodded meekly.

The characteristically jovial off-the-cuff statement was doubly significant. By naming a date Sir Freddie had committed the makers to deliver-

ing his first Airbus three weeks early, and by ordering the fleet in the first place he was taking what was to prove one of the few bad business decisions of his life.

Sir Freddie was raised in properly humble surroundings in Canterbury; his father, a merchant seaman, deserted the family when the only child was eight, and his mother had to turn to the unlikely business of scrap dealing to make ends meet.

He had a short spell in the newly created British European Airways immediately after the war, but the bureaucracy was too constricting for a man of Sir Freddie's stamp. With his own and his mother's savings he bought some government surplus trucks and sold them. With this profit he bought a cherry orchard and sold it. With these profits he bought radio spares and sold them.

His blinding vision of the future, he says, came when he saw, at one time, the aircraft Handley Page flying together in the Kent sky: from that moment his life and his fortune were to be aircraft. He found work in the Short Brothers aircraft factory at Rochester, where he was soon turning his first profit by fetch-

ing his workmates 1d cans of tea, having negotiated favourable bulk rates with the can-can girl.

Wartime experience as a ferry pilot gained him flying, engineering qualifications, giving him an intimate knowledge of aircraft that has stood him in good stead ever since.

He had a short spell in the

old friend in a public house in Whitehall, brought him a £38,000 loan with which he bought BOAC's entire fleet of 12 Halifax bombers converted to passenger use. By the time the Berlin airlift was over he was the owner of 100 redundant wartime aircraft and 6,000 spare engines.

He melted them down and sold the lot to a maker of aluminium saucepans; with these profits he bought his first car, a Riley Royce.

He became managing director of British United Airways, in which role he took on the rôle of the Heathrow airport air traffic controller. But Sir Freddie has never been happy as anyone else's employee.

He left BUA in 1965; friends say that it was the frustration of spending much of his working day negotiating with trade unions, rather than running an airline, that drove

him out. Sir Freddie and the unions have never had much time for each other.

Another, rarely mentioned factor, is that about that time his son Kevin was killed in the MG sports car his father had given him for his seventeenth birthday, and which he says he had "doctored" so that it was not capable of high speeds.

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and did well in the burgeoning package holiday business, but it was not until 1971 that he announced Skytrain and began the long battle against the British and American governments, and what he saw as the artificially high prices of transatlantic air tickets.

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PARLIAMENT Feb 5 1981

British Airways will be sold in spite of Laker's downfall

AVIATION

The changing rate of the pound for the dollar after he had taken out loans and the world-wide recession in air travel had caused the deterioration in Sir Freddie Laker's traffic figures. Mr Iain Spratt, Under Secretary of State for Trade said during exchanges following a statement on the collapse of Laker Airways:

"Mr Clive Davis" (Hackney Central, Lab), a former junior minister for aviation matters, had asked the minister to look again at the question of an inquiry being held under section 165 of the Companies Act "having regard to the totally reckless statements made only two days previously by Sir Freddie Laker by which passengers' credits and others might well have been misled. Mr Spratt said that he would do so.

The Minister also added that British Caledonian, Pan Am and Florida Airlines had offered to take the stranded Laker passengers.

Mr Spratt said that in the event that the receiver decides to cease operating flights passengers who have paid their bookings for a package holiday would be protected on the first instance by the bond (guaranteed by the bank) which Laker's tour operating companies provide as a condition of their Air Travel Organisers' Licence. This would be immediately available to sensible alternative arrangements to be made to bring home people who are already abroad.

Those who had booked but not yet travelled could seek compensation from the tour operator if proved insufficient to meet all legitimate claims, from the Air Travel Reserve Fund.

These arrangements would not cover those travelling on Skytrain scheduled services. Laker services are no longer operating; they would have to travel by alternative means. If they had unused tickets they would be in the position of unsecured creditors, unless they could exchange them for valid tickets issued by another airline.

I understand that the receiver is exploring every possibility of minimising the inconvenience suffered by passengers, and it will become clearer when he has had a little more time to consider what can be done. Travellers affected should therefore watch for further information in the media.

Mr Kenneth Woolmer, an Opposition spokesman on trade (Ballymena, N.I., Lab) can be assured holidaymakers will get their money back; that funds are adequate and that refunds will be made quickly so individuals and families can make alternative holiday arrangements.

The position regarding passengers booked on scheduled services is not clear. How many are there and what can be done?

Would the minister consider it appropriate to appoint an inspector under the powers in hand under the Companies Act in order to examine the affairs of recent months?

What does he intend to do about route licences, how many are involved and how are the interests of British Airways and our commercial interests to be safeguarded?

Does this not show there is an urgent need to review British aviation policy by the Government. The failure to have any policy makes me feel the answers I read in the papers to my questions about the North Atlantic Route, were a sham then and are now. Will the minister go away, learn his lesson and bring back to the House a proper review of events and a policy? (Labour cheers)

Mr Spratt: We share your concern about passengers. Funds certainly will be adequate from the bonding arrangements from the Air Travel Reserve Fund. The total available from those two is over £23m. That will certainly cover those on charter holiday packages.

As far as many schedules passengers were involved, we understand it is of the nature of 5,000 on each side of the Atlantic. There are 2,600 employees and certainly everything will be done to safeguard them. So far we have no evidence that an inquiry by my department is part of the Department of Trade, under Section 165 of the Companies Act, 1948, would be justified. If the receiver finds any reason to seek one he will doubtless inform us.

If the company should subsequently go into liquidation it will be the duty of the liquidator to carry out a full investigation of the circumstances and report if he has any reason to believe any inquiry has occurred.

As for route licences, at the European end of it is affected Laker Airways had a kind of blanket charter, at the moment running charter flights to five countries in Europe and two in North Africa — Morocco and Tunisia.

In the United States he was running services to New York, Los Angeles, Miami and Tampa and on the specific issue of the appropriate aviation authority on both sides of the Atlantic — on this side the Civil Aviation Authority — will look at them and see what can be done, and who may apply the licences if and when Laker Airways give them up.

We remain convinced that we

should strive for a better deal for the consumer, that we should pursue our policy of competition and seek stability for airlines.

Herr Helmut Schmidt, the West German Chancellor, today won a resounding parliamentary victory for his coalition Government's domestic and foreign policies.

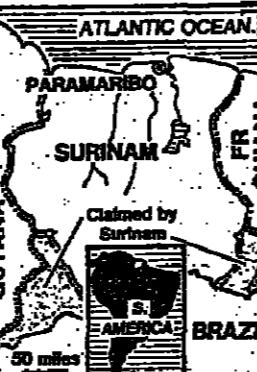
Without exception, the coalition deputies — 216 Social Democrats and 53 Free Democrats — voted in the Bundestag in favour of the Chancellor's motion for a vote of confidence.

This gave the Government a majority of 43 over the Christian Democratic Opposition. The result was greeted with prolonged applause from the coalition benches.

But predictably, the Opposition says the vote proves nothing, except that the Government is in desperate

NEWS IN SUMMARY

Civilians ousted in Surinam



Paramaribo. — Surinam's National Military Council announced that it had re-assumed direct rule after the resignation of President Henck Chin A Sen and his cabinet.

The Council said that the move followed "policy disagreements", but it gave no details.

The Council has ruled the former Dutch colony, on the north coast of South America, since seizing power in February, 1980. Dr Chin A Sen's mainly civilian Government was dismissed in August of that year, but the Council continued to exercise control over the country.

A four-man military committee has taken over the day-to-day administration. It is headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Deysi Bouterse, the Army Commander and chairman of the National Military Council. Colonel Bouterse has said that a new civilian government will be formed "as soon as possible".

Mr Spratt: Sir Freddie is a great entrepreneur who has done wonderful things for passengers. It is and it will remain this Government's firm policy to privatise BA as soon as practicable. (Labour interruptions and protests.)

BA's pre-tax loss was £14m last year. We have to look closely at how taxpayers' money is being used to fund these nationalised industries.

Having said that, I spoke to Sir John Young, BA's chairman, and to the British Caledonian chairman, Mr Adam Thompson. Both made generous

statements on how they were going to help any stranded passengers. Mr Thompson said he would fly passengers back to the UK if necessary. That shows what free enterprise will do.

Mr David Ennals (Norwich, North, Lab): Many of us would be horrified by Mr Spratt's threat to privatise BA. It would, presumably, go down in the same way as Freddie Laker has gone.

Does the minister not feel any sense of responsibility? If Laker Airways was the prime example of successful private enterprise, why has the Government raised not a finger to preserve it for 2,600 workers and their customers?

Mr Spratt: It has been our policy to privatise BA for a long time. Last year private airlines overall in this country made an overall profit. On helping Sir Freddie, a reasonable argument was made by officials of Laker Airways to my department, and we would not consider it appropriate to intervene.

Mr Robert McCracken (Brentwood and Ongar, C): Will the minister discontinue his support of Laker Airlines to those in competition with Laker across the Atlantic to buy out passengers who become stranded?

What is the position of small travel agents who may have to pay more fares and may well face suits from stranded passengers?

Mr Spratt: I will certainly look at the problem of the small travel agents.

Mr Harry Greenway (Ealing, North, C) said Sir Freddie Laker had been undermined by the fact that state airlines brought their flight rates down to compete with Laker's prices. What is the minister's view?

Mr Spratt: It is true that the state airlines brought their flight rates down to compete with Laker's prices. This is disgraceful. The passengers had paid for their own demise.

Mr Spratt: It is true that the state airlines are trying to sustain British Airways at the present time. (Labour interruptions.) Perhaps £14m last year will convince your MPs that it is time to merge with BA.

Certainly, we intend to continue with our plans to privatise British Airways as soon as possible.

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THE FALL OF LAKER

There are lots of lessons to be learnt from the failure of Laker Airways — and some danger that the lessons learnt will be the wrong ones. There will be calls to strengthen the stranglehold which the state has on ownership and competition. That would be bad for customers, bad for economies and bad for the development of air transport.

Not all those calls come from the left though the demands in Parliament yesterday are a depressing reminder of the mindless opposition to privatization. The airline industry itself is likely to take satisfaction in Sir Freddie's fall. The cause of cheap fares and open skies has been put back. But the challenge which Laker posed to the cartel in air travel and the example he gave of how competition can improve services must not be lost.

At the heart of the Laker revolution in travel across the North Atlantic was a basic proposition of business. If you can give people something which they want at lower cost, more will choose to buy. It is the secret of the great expansion of the western free market economies over the past 200 years. Yet it is too often forgotten.

Nowhere has the neglect of this elementary rule been more apparent than in the airline industry. Governments and airlines have cooperated to keep out competition. As a result, fares have been kept high and the number of people who could afford to fly has been kept down. To complete the circle, the airlines have claimed that air passengers are more interested in the frequency of service than the price they pay.

It is this circle which Sir Freddie broke with his Skyrain service. Before that was launched he was little more than an enterprising operator of charter flights. Skyrain revolutionized long-distance air travel by cutting through much of the expensive inconvenience of traditional airlines. Its most important feature was certainly the low price; but its attractiveness for many passengers was

enhanced by the feeling that they could walk on to the aircraft without the complexities of making reservations and booking in advance.

Some of the changes pioneered by Skyrain will survive. The standby concept has been adopted by the conventional airlines who Sir Freddie set out to beat, at least on those routes where passengers had the choice of using Laker. The move towards greater competition within the United States was helped by the success of Laker and is unlikely ever to be wholly reversed. But much of the structure of air travel has been left untouched and is likely to try to reassess itself even on the North Atlantic route where competition is fiercest. The established airlines have beaten off the interloper and will be inclined to see his failure as an endorsement of all their past practices. They would be wrong.

They would be wrong to deny that price competition attracts new customers. Over the past year Laker's competitors have been using their considerable financial resources to cut their own prices to a level well below their costs. British Airways, along with most lines, has been making heavy losses on the North Atlantic route. BA had the taxpayers to cover them; Sir Freddie did not. But if it took adoption of low fares by the other airlines to weaken his hold, they would be unwise to turn back that clock.

Just as the airlines would be wrong to conclude that cheap fares do not matter, governments would be wrong to conclude that new entrants without massive backing are so unreliable that they ought to be kept out altogether. There is much false concern from critics of Sir Freddie for the small number of people who find that they will not be able to travel to the United States because their flight in the next few days has been cancelled. They would do better to show interest in the millions of people who crossed the Atlantic in recent years and could not have done

so without the Laker revolution. The task for government is to make sure that in the future it will be easier for someone to try again to do what Sir Freddie did, not to put new barriers in the way.

There are two particular points which the Government has to consider. One is the role of regulation in the airline industry in Europe. There is too much of it.

Established airlines will try to

keep the pattern of high fares, poor service and excessive costs by pointing to the Laker failure. Britain has been a force in favour of more competition in Europe, so far with little success. It must go on pressing the case, both in its dealings with other governments and with the European Commission. There is no reason why it should not be cheaper to fly to Athens than to New York other than rules of protection. Their artificiality is shown by the spread of the "bucket-shop" operations in Europe, in which airlines regularly sell seats at prices far below the agreed price while constantly denouncing others for the same activity. Any system which makes people ashamed of cutting prices is a bad system.

Yours faithfully,
GORDON PEPPER,
Staddeden,
Sissinghurst,
Cranbrook,
Kent.
February 1.

The second major policy question for the Government is on the privatization of British Airways. This should go ahead as soon as possible. State ownership breeds state regulation. If the taxpayer has to pick up the bill, government will always keep fares high to cut the aid it has to give. If Sir Freddie had not been faced by bottomless state purses he might still be importunate.

Jeanne Preston, who compiled the diary, used authentic sources, as the television producer Michael Croucher, who followed on with the research that I initiated, found out. Mrs Preston drew on her own memories of life on a Herefordshire farm in the 1880s and 1890s, her mother's and grandmother's recipe collection and the stories told to her as a child by one Mary Anne Thomas, Anne Hughes's daughter, then in her eighties, who also read to her out of Anne Hughes's diary. This diary, "a thin book with spider writing", certainly existed and was in Mrs Preston's possession in the early 1940s, but has since vanished.

Anne Hughes's diary as published today, however, is an amalgam by Mrs Preston reaching back to her childhood memories of 50 years ago (she was born in 1884) and making use of Anne Hughes's diary and the notes she made as a girl of Mary Anne Thomas's stories, with family recipes included. So as folk history it is certainly worth taking seriously.

Perhaps one day the real diary may be found, and the redstone necklace mentioned in it, which Jeanne Preston sold at a Red Cross sale to raise money for the war effort in the 1940s (it fetched £170). Meanwhile, may readers continue to enjoy this delightful book in the knowledge that it contains much truth mixed with a little fancy.

Yours faithfully,
AMANDA CORNFORD,
The Brick House,
Wicken Bonham,
Saffron Walden,
Essex.
February 2.

Lloyd's Bill

From Sir Peter Vanneck, MEP for Cleveland (Conservative)

Sir, From days as Lord Mayor I take a continuing interest in the invisible earnings of the City of London, based on its internationality, expertise, integrity, and the efficacy of its self-regulation. The current controversy over the Corporation of Lloyd's Bill before the House of Commons, particularly now that I am a member, is a matter of concern.

I well recollect, when I was on the Stock Exchange Council, how one fell one had to look over one's shoulder in disciplining a firm or members in case the parties concerned threatened that this would prejudice some other legal action in which they were involved.

While one was assured that the courts would hold that we acted in good faith, at least qualifi-

cally, I venture to think that were the Stock Exchange putting forward a Bill these days it would grasp with relief the opportunity to ensure statutorily that its council was granted freedom from suit in the conduct of its affairs with its members.

Yours truly,
PETER VANNECK,
City Gate House,
Finsbury Square, EC2.
February 4.

LICENCE LICENSED

Twenty members of Parliament spoke or intervened in the debate the other night about the new clause and schedule the Minister has added to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, a clause empowering local authorities to exercise control over sex shops and sex cinemas. It is notable that no one took up the cudgels on behalf of these wayside flowers of consumerism. No one rolled out the argument that here is a form of enterprise which has sprung up to meet a demand that is not unlawful — not to everyone's taste perhaps, offensive even to some, but squarely inside that enclosure of personal preferences where the law trespasses at peril of looking foolish.

Even those MPs who once upon a time would have carried the colours of libertarianism had other fish to fry or other credentials to establish. Listen to Mr Reg Race (expletives deleted): "Sex shops portray women as simply available for sex, as mindless bodies with no views of their own and no position in life other than as sex objects to be used for the

pleasure of men. I reject that completely". The purveyors of sex put to shame by the enemies of sexism, subject for a painting by Boucher. Of course we have not heard from the House of Lords yet. They, who have no constituents, have been the legislative vanguard for the earlier Mr Jenkins's permissive society. But on the evidence of the debate so far a change has overtaken the legislative climate. An alliance between old-fashioned moralists and new-fangled feminists is poised to roll back the frontiers of licentiousness.

All who spoke complimented the Minister for bringing in an apparatus of control, and almost all urged him to make it more restrictive. Particularly they wanted local authorities to be able to say no to sex shops altogether, which the clause as it stands apparently does not allow. Some also blanchet at the parliamentary draftsmen's imaginative attempt to encompass the whole range of weird and gruesome implements made available by the sex stockist for the extraction of pleasure. "In this Schedule, 'sex article' means

(a) anything made for use in connexion with, or for the purpose of stimulating or encouraging (i) sexual activity, or (ii) acts of force, restraint, violence or cruelty which are associated with sexual activity. . . . The words in italics proved too much for some Members, who saw Parliament being invited to license, and by licensing to approve, the sale of sadomasochistic appliances. What next?

In vain did Mr Timothy Raison, piloting the new clause, plead that the Bill before them was one to augment the powers of local authorities, not to reform the law of obscenity; that the courts could not be depended upon to find such articles obscene and their offer for sale an offence; and that therefore if Parliament scurried to include the objectionable words it would be conferring powers of control over retail outlets of the sex industry while exempting from control all the most obnoxious specimens. The draftsmen, like Mr Race, are to be asked to kindly express themselves less bluntly.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN SANDALL,
Ways and Means Office,
House of Commons.
February 4.

Laker enterprise's unequal load

From Mr Martin Drew

Sir, With the calling in of a managing receiver at Laker Airways we witness yet again the unequal burden between state and private industry. An inefficient state airline, losing millions through overmanning, losses on, and an efficient but over-ambitious private airline goes under.

Some of us thought we had elected a Conservative Government to put an end to this unacceptable face of socialism.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN DREW,
24 Hugh Street, SW1.
February 5.

Dry observation

From Mr Gordon Pepper

Sir, Will all the wets, both in the House of Commons and outside, which includes the press, please read, mark, learn and inwardly digest what is happening in both Eire and Australia? Short-term palliatives, such as a huge Budget deficit in Eire and a wages commission in Australia, have a very nasty habit of having distinctly perverse effects in the longer term.

Yours faithfully,
GORDON PEPPER,
Staddeden,
Sissinghurst,
Cranbrook,
Kent.
February 1.

A diary in question

From Mrs Amanda Cornford

Sir, I entirely agree with Jacqueline Simpson (January 29) that the authenticity of *The Diary of a Farmer's Wife* by Anne Hughes is important, but not that it is just a "pretty fiction".

Jeanne Preston, who compiled the diary, used authentic sources, as the television producer Michael Croucher, who followed on with the research that I initiated, found out. Mrs Preston drew on her own memories of life on a Herefordshire farm in the 1880s and 1890s, her mother's and grandmother's recipe collection and the stories told to her as a child by one Mary Anne Thomas, Anne Hughes's daughter, then in her eighties, who also read to her out of Anne Hughes's diary. This diary, "a thin book with spider writing", certainly existed and was in Mrs Preston's possession in the early 1940s, but has since vanished.

Anne Hughes's diary as published today, however, is an amalgam by Mrs Preston reaching back to her childhood memories of 50 years ago (she was born in 1884) and making use of Anne Hughes's diary and the notes she made as a girl of Mary Anne Thomas's stories, with family recipes included. So as folk history it is certainly worth taking seriously.

Perhaps one day the real diary may be found, and the redstone necklace mentioned in it, which Jeanne Preston sold at a Red Cross sale to raise money for the war effort in the 1940s (it fetched £170). Meanwhile, may readers continue to enjoy this delightful book in the knowledge that it contains much truth mixed with a little fancy.

Yours faithfully,
AMANDA CORNFORD,
The Brick House,
Wicken Bonham,
Saffron Walden,
Essex.
February 2.

Nature of the SDP

From Mr Evans Luard

Sir, Your juxtaposition of letters about the SDP today (February 2) aptly demonstrates the danger of reaching premature conclusions concerning the type of party it is.

I share the belief of Martin Camroux and Robert Lacey that the SDP, if it is to be an effective force in British politics, must be a party that is deeply committed to creating a much more equal society than we have in Britain today.

Unlike them I still hope and believe it will be such a party. Certainly the fact that it engages in "slick PR" need not prevent it being so. Nor even need a decision (if such there is) to permit the right to private health and education, so long as there is a commitment to devote sufficient resources to public health and education and to integrate the two systems more closely together.

But the main point is that all these matters are still to be decided. It makes little sense to abandon a party on policy grounds at a time when policy is still being formed.

Meanwhile there is some evidence that the party has not become irredeemably right-wing in the other letter you publish today. If SDP members have been consistently voting against the present Government in Parliament, it suggests that it may still be a radical force within our political system: that it is indeed, given its electoral support and the distractions preoccupying the Labour Party, now the basic opposition party in Britain.

While one was assured that the courts would hold that we acted in good faith, at least qualifi-

cally, I venture to think that were the Stock Exchange putting forward a Bill these days it would grasp with relief the opportunity to ensure statutorily that its council was granted freedom from suit in the conduct of its affairs with its members.

Yours faithfully,
EVAN LUARD,
35 Observatory St, Oxford.
February 2.

In vitro risks

From Ms S. Porter-Williams

Sir, In *The Times* of January 28,

you report that Dr Michael Thomas, chairman of the British Medical Association's central ethical committee, has called for a moratorium on test-tube baby work until its ethics have been more widely discussed. His reasons are that he thinks that in vitro fertilization may increase the risk of congenital abnormalities, and that simply being infertile does not justify the risk.

I disagree with Dr Thomas.

In view of Mr Weatherill's statement to the House on December 9, 1980 (column 1161 of Hansard) that as a member of Lloyd's he would not take part in any of the parliamentary proceedings relating to the Lloyd's Bill, I would be grateful if this correction could be made.

Yours faithfully,
SHEILA PORTER-WILLIAMS,
Green Haven,
Halfway Lane,
Dunchurch,
Rugby.
January 31.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sources of support for universities

From Professor C. A. Pasternak

Sir, Over the past four months you have published many letters, each of which has in some way criticized the Government for curtailing its grant to universities. What is surprising is how many academics admit in private that once the difficult and painful task of reducing the present level of activity has been achieved their universities will emerge as more effective and productive units. No one can deny that there is dead wood and wastage in our centres of higher learning, just as there is in our factories and railways.

Should we actually thank the Government for their draconian measures? To a certain degree, perhaps, and for another reason also. The present cut-back will force those of an ambitious, creative and industrious bent to turn to alternative sources of funding, namely the private sector. The benefits of that lie in the removal of some of the control that Government through the University Grants Committee, exercises over universities.

I imagine I am not alone in believing that the aim of a university education should be to train a student to think logically. It does not matter too much whether this is achieved through a study of physics, biology, mathematics, philosophy, ancient history or Sanskrit. Vocational training in bridge-building, education, pharmacy or theology is best done instead of, or subsequent to, an undergraduate university course.

Given that undergraduate education is more of a luxury than a necessity, in the sense that music, literature or painting is, it is appropriate for Government or the UGC to coerce universities into concentrating on another discipline. Market forces nowadays make students choose those subjects for which they see an appropriate career at the end of course. Thus the argument of the wise laws of that land permit such gifts to be for the most part tax-deductible. Gifts by individuals to British universities have to be made out of taxed income.

Given that the Treasury is now failing to provide enough money to ensure that the country has the university system it deserves, and since the University Grants Committee long ago ceased to be a buffer between scholars and the politicians, there is an urgent need for a change in the tax laws here, if universities are to flourish in independence.

The Chancellor may be said to have a duty in this matter, since at present the hardest blows are being directed at some of the universities with the lowest capitalization. If gifts to universities were made tax-deductible, not only would the socially damaging consequences of the UGC's impositions be softened but, also, I am sure, even Professor Quirk would be astonished by the response in these pitiless times.

The first is a very modest one, cited merely because of personal involvement. Three years ago at St George's, the Cell Surface Research Fund was set up. The aim was to supplement income received from the national granting agencies for medical research by appealing to industry and the private sector: one of our reasons was dissatisfaction with the way in which long-term research was being funded (letters to *The Times*, September 13 and 15, 1978). Despite the continually worsening financial situation, the CSRF has managed

to flourish in independence.

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SOCIAL NEWS

Today is the thirtieth anniversary of the accession of the Queen. The President of the United States is 71 today.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will visit the Home Office to mark the bicentenary on March 25.

The Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, will open the new development in the Chapel Mews at Windsor on March 31.

Forthcoming marriages

Flight Lieutenant M. K. C. Allen, RAF, and Flight Lieutenant S. E. Denzey, PMAFNS

The engagement is announced between Michael, younger son of Professor and Mrs K. W. Allen, of Bour Hill, Oxford, and Susan, only daughter of Mr and Mrs N. Denzey of Whinflorey Hall, Malton, North Yorkshire.

Mr E. Buckhalter

and Miss A. J. Shaw

The engagement is announced between Edwin, only son of Mr and Mrs M. Buckhalter, of Dulwich, London, and Amanda, only daughter of Mr and Mrs G. V. Shaw, of Shenstone, Staffordshire.

Mr A. L. H. Smith

and Miss C. S. Abbott

The engagement is announced between Andrew, eldest son of Dr A. L. and Mrs G. J. Smith, of Bromborough, Merseyside, and Caroline, daughter of Mr and Mrs R. J. Abbott, of Swanage, Dorset.

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and Miss T. J. Wrinch

The engagement is announced between Paul, younger son of Mr and Mrs F. W. Wetton, of Cheddle Hulme, and Jenny, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs R. P. Wrinch, of Wilmslow, Cheshire.

Dr W. F. J. Harkness

and Princess Philippa Lubomirska

The engagement is announced between William, only son of Mr and Mrs J. W. Harkness, of Stok Fleming, Dartmoor, Devon, and Philippa, second daughter of Prince and Princess Marek Lubomirski, of Ecclis, Montreuil-sur-Mer, France.

Service luncheon

Royal Corps of Transport

Major-General W. M. Allen, Director General of Transport and Movements, held a luncheon yesterday at the Royal Corps of Transport Headquarters Mess, Aldershot, in honour of present and past TA Colonels of the Royal Corps of Transport. The principal guest was Lieutenant-General Sir Roland Guy, Major-General W. Bale, Major-General A. A. G. C. Price, Colonel P. D. Baldwin, Colonel W. Howlett, Colonel A. B. Waller and Colonel C. N. Meares.

Dinners

Master Tailors' Benevolent Association

The Master Tailors' Benevolent Association held their annual dinner at the Europe Hotel on February 4, 1982. The principal guests were Mr George Thomas, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Mr Robert Hardy. Others present were Mr Robert J. Bright, appeal chairman, and Mr F. G. Welchman, president.

Dramatists' Club

Mr Sheridan Morley and Miss Alison Seelye were guests of honour at the dinner of the Dramatists' Club held at night at the Garrick Club. Sir Ronald Millar, president of the club, was in the chair, and Mr Peter Barkworth was also present.

Service dinner

Honourable Artillery Company Mess Club

The Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs were guests of the Honourable Artillery Company Mess Club at dinner at Armoury House last night. Major J. P. Sworder, president, was in the chair. Colonel the Rev K. C. Oliver, the Lord Mayor, Mr R. Vergette, and Colonel the Earl of Avon also spoke.

University news

Liverpool Apartments

Senior Lecturers, P. Parker, MB, BS (London), child health; C. A. Hart, MRCP, MRCPG, MRCPCH, medical microbiology; G. E. Dowd, MRCP, MRCPG, MRCPCH, orthopaedic and accident surgery; S. R. Foster, BSC, MB, ChB (Edin), Surgery.

Stirling

Professor Duncan Timms, of the department of sociology, and Professor James Trainer, of the department of German, have been appointed deputy principals until July 31, 1984, and December 31, 1984 respectively.

The Prince and Princess of Wales will open the new buildings of St Gemma's Hospice, Harrogate Road, Leeds, on March 30.

The Prince of Wales, as patron, will open the "Vikings in England" exhibition at the Yorkshire Museum, York, on March 30.

Princess Anne, Chancellor of London University, will visit College Hall and the Students' Union on March 15.

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Mr C. Gotting

and Miss J. E. V. Roberts

The engagement is announced between Christoph, younger son of the late Dr Franz Gotting and Mrs Maria Gotting, of Wiesbaden, West Germany, and Elaine, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs A. R. V. Roberts, of Michelmersh, Hampshire.

Marriage

Mrs C. Gotting

and Miss J. E. V. Roberts

The marriage took place on January 29 between Major-General W. Reynell Taylor, HQ BAOR, and Mrs Rosemary Gardner (nee Breed), of Chiswick, London, and Nicosia, Cyprus.

Latest wills

Latest estates include (net, before tax paid):

Baker, Mr Stanley Frederick Harold, of Banstead, Surrey £22,108

Bawker, Mr Ronald Scott Lawrence, of Winchester, solicitor £74,285

Collinson, Mr Ronald George of Stratford, North Hertfordshire, chartered accountant £254,710

Donaldson, Mrs Hylda May, of Kingston upon Thames, Surrey £250,907

Leader, Mr Eric Charles, of Chacewater, Truro £239,298

Peat, Mr Frank Cadman, of Brighton, Shelfield £340,583

Birthdays

Mr Fred Trueman, the former cricketer, who is 51 today.

TODAY: Mr Claudio Arrau, 79; Sir Edward Buckley, 76; Mr Peter Cadbury, 64; Sir Robert Erskine-Hill, 65; Sir John Gardner, 85; Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard, 85; Mr Louis Herrem, 63; Mr J. E. C. Hill, 70; Professor Nevil Johnson, 53; Mr Patrick Macne, 60; Mr Rev. E. Garth Moore, 76; Dr Dennis Morris, 60; Mr Michael Morris, 33; Lord Roskill, 71; Mr Francois Truffaut, 50; Mr Keith Waterhouse, 53; Lord Woolley, 57; Mr Bill Wright, 58.

TOMORROW: Mr Arthur Bottom, 72; Sir Michael Dibdin, 56; Professor Henry Clifford Darby, 56; the Earl of Cork and Orrery, 72; the Earl of Harewood, 59; Mr Peter Jay, 45; Lord Keith of Kinkel, 60; Sir John Leysh, 54; Mr George Mosley, 57; Sir Michael Newton, 50; Sir Geoffrey Peacock, 52; Mr R. W. Watson, 56; Sir Brian Windeyer, 78.

Services tomorrow:

Septuagesima

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: HC. 8.30

ST MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER: Sung Eucharist, 11.30

ST BARTHolemew-the-Great: PRIORY (AD 1251): HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

the glorious work (Haydn). Canon Knapp-Fisher, HC 10.30 AM

and the organ (Elgar).

ST GEORGE'S, Hanover Square: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST MARY ABOTS: Hanover Square, HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST MARYLEBONE PARISH CHURCH: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST PAUL'S, Wilton Place, Knightsbridge: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST PAUL'S INN CHAPEL: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST SIMON ZELOTES: Charing Cross: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST MICHAEL'S, Gloucester Road: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST HILDA'S, Brixton: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST MARY MAGDALENE: Paddington: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST COLUMBA'S (Church of Scotland): St Paul Street, Lambeth: HC. 8.30

Choral Evensong, 6pm

ST ANSELM AND CECILIA: Sung Eucharist, 11.30

ST BRUNELLA: Sung Eucharist, 11.30

ST CECILIA: Sung Eucharist, 11.30

The exploits of Edgar Wallace

Edgar Wallace won fame as a thriller-writer with a superbly simple formula: "crime and blood and three murders to the chapter." He also wrote African adventures and tales of the Turf — more than 150 novels in all — as well as plays and films. In a *Punch* cartoon, in his heyday, a traveller at a station bookstall asked "Have you got the midday Wallace?" He died 50 years ago. Michael Innes, master of the classic detective story, recalls and reassesses him.

A bottle of whisky had been placed on a small table beside the speaker by hosts unaware that what he might have preferred was constant fill-ups of strong sweet tea. He did justice to the whisky nevertheless, and I see the bottle as empty by the time he had finished talking. This may be a trick of memory: it was more than fifty years ago, after all. What I am certain of is an impression of extreme exhaustion held at bay by an iron will. The heavy eye-lids drooped more and more alarmingly over the long cigarette holder, and he was as pale as any of the innumerable corpses that clutter up his plays and novels.

At the same time he seemed a man much at his ease, dissimulating without difficulty the insignificance of addressing twenty-three undergraduates calling themselves for the occasion the Oxford Edgar Wallace Society. We had perhaps expected something "louid" about him. Nothing of the kind was on view.

What did he talk about, or rather narrate? It was Sanders-Bones-Bosambo stuff, with Wallace himself improbably, indeed preposterously, close to the centre of every action. We were sophisticated after a juvenile fashion: knew we were listening to a pack of lies; were amused. But then our perception of the affair changed. These were new lies. Wallace wasn't putting on a stock performance. He was creating as he spoke — fluently, with scarcely a pause — just as if he were at his dictaphone at home, running up a new novel or play over the weekend.

We finished by listening awed in the presence of this inventive power. Joseph Conrad, could he be conceived of as speaking to us about *Heart of Darkness*, Joyce Cary describing to a succeeding generation of students the background of *Aissa Sadeq*, could scarcely have produced a more persuasive assertion of familiarity with the mysteries of Congo or Niger.

Edgar Wallace was the illegitimate child of a struggling small-time actress who concealed his birth and arranged for his bringing up by foster-parents in the large family of a Billingsgate fish-porter. He was to regard himself as having been completely rejected by his mother, and is said to have turned her away from his door with a wholly uncharacteristic harshness when she presented herself in a distressed condition in her later years.

In his boyhood she did however visit him from time to time, and her occasional gifts of theatre tickets, together with her general

theatrical ambience, probably constituted as profound a formative influence as he was to undergo. Most of what he did had as its sole aim the acquiring of money to spend. But the theatre was an exception. At the level of melodrama, which he understood, stood in the stage was with him an absorbing passion pursued for its own sake.

His early years were unremarkable. Not caring for employment as a newsboy or bottle-washer, he ran away to sea, and quickly ran back again. He enlisted and was sent to South Africa, astutely commanded to transfer himself to the easy service of the Medical Staff Corps, and began to write.

He achieved some local fame as the Kipling Tommy who could turn out the more facile sort of Kipling verse, and Kipling himself said friendly things about him.

Soon he had bought his discharge from the army with a borrowed eighteen pounds, been appointed a Reuter's correspondent of a subordinate sort, and thus launched on a journalist's career — the diverse and often hectic activities of which he was to pursue side by side with intensive authorship to the end of his days.

All this was much to the credit of an entirely self-educated young man — or rather a young man uninterested in any sort of self-education, not of evident immediate utility in a more than moderately ambitious conception of getting on. There was nothing meteoric about his career. Endowed with immense self-confidence and resilience, easily excited to a valuable pitch of nervous tension yet with a power of swiftly recovered equanimity and poise, he is nevertheless to be seen constantly making mis-calculations, losing jobs, involved in bizarre fiascos, essentially through not knowing quite enough.

Thus he could be enthusiastic over the Turf, and spin yarns about it with all the convincing know-how of a Nat Gould or a Dick Francis, but when he bought horses (giving them proud names out of the Sanders stories) they almost invariably proved not to be the sort of animals that win races. When he wrote a new play he was without any disciplined critical faculty to bring to bear on it, and could be totally at sea as to whether it was good or bad. Even the common mechanisms of the market place were often obscure to him — a fact well illustrated by the odd history of *The Four Just Men*.

The book was planned as his first big coup with a crime thriller, and he based himself on the premise that anything that is sufficiently widely advertised is

bound to sell widely. He had also thought up what would later have been called a gimmick. The manner in which the Just Men had killed the wicked Foreign Secretary was to be withheld, and £500 was to be distributed in prizes to readers sending in approved solutions.

On this project he worked with frenzied enthusiasm. £1,000 (scarcely a penny towards which he possessed) was his first estimate of the cost of producing the book. But as his zeal mounted, and London became plastered with huge posters announcing what was in store for it, the bill mounted too. "I shall be glad," he wrote to his wife in South Africa, "to have the book finished and off my conscience, for I am most anxious to get on with the advertising part of it. This latter is really the most important part."

Thus plugged, the book did, not unnaturally, go well. But as its retail price was only 3s 6d it was obvious that sales would have to be phenomenal indeed if the enterprise were not to end in disaster. Here was what Wallace had failed to consider — and he had failed, too, to reflect on the likelihood that passably "correct" solutions to his mystery would come in by the hundred, as indeed they did. As he had no money at all except what the book was earning from day to day, there were delays and silences which prompted widespread suspicions of fraud.

Wallace was working on the *Daily Mail* at the time, and the novel had been lavishly advertised in the paper. Its proprietor, Alfred Harnsworth, took the view that his reputation required him to put up the money to rescue his employee. But for some time he thought poorly of Wallace, and to be thought poorly of by Harnsworth was not the best of luck.

Nevertheless *The Four Just Men* marked a turning-point in Wallace's career, since it gave him his master formula. He had been trying his hand at romantic fiction, entirely without success. But now, in sending his wife for some reason a book called *A World Without a Child*, he wrote:

"It is of course full of religious tosh that seems to take with the blithering multitude, in fact

religion and immorality are the only things that sell books nowadays. I am going to start a middle course and give them

crime and blood and three murders to the chapter: such is the insanity of the age that I do not doubt for one moment the success of my venture."

In the long run the event justified his confidence. "Crime and blood and three murders to the chapter" was as unfailing a success as Raymond Chandler's "Have a man come in the door with a gun". One simply need never be stuck.

He had begun as a journalist sharply observant on the fringe of things. In Africa he had been not only a private soldier and a war correspondent but also, at a later date, an investigator on behalf of "Harmless" Sanders of run-down atrocities in the Belgian Congo. Of native life in its more picturesque aspects, and the problems it presented to white administrators he had picked up much, but largely at second-hand and what may be called a yarning level; like Kipling he knew that "sometimes in a smoking-room, one learns why things were done". The long series of Sanders and related stories — the next important landmark after *The Four Just Men* — is based on this, on some rapid reading in aid of the project, and (one is inclined to suppose) on the widely popular African romances of Rider Haggard.

The numerous kingdoms over which Mr. Commissioner Sanders holds sway are peopled by savages and cannibals all of whom are vily, nearly all cruel and courageous, a few mild and cowardly. They are credited, at convenience, with telepathic and mesmeric powers, so that Sanders, chugging round among them in his little river steamer and commonly only with a small detail of native troops, is hard put to it to come out regularly on top. He is very much a man of swift action, liberal with hangings and "scientifically" inflicted floggings, and the basis of his power is that succinctly expressed by Hilaire Belloc:

"We have got the Gatling gun and they have not."

Far left: the former Billingsgate street urchin with the traditional symbol of success, in Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, 1931, and on the set of *Red Aces* at Beaconsfield.

Left: Bela Lugosi in *Dark Eyes of London*, 1939.

He can afford to be foolhardy. He will walk nonchalantly into a trap; be trussed and later put to the torture of having to dance barefoot on hot stones. Just in time, the super-wily but faithful Bosambo and his tribe will turn up, a gun will be unmasked and begin rapid fire, the torturers will scatter and all be well.

Here and there in the stories a sentimental touch is admitted — as when a boy-king whom Sanders has introduced to his dukes with the help of a cane lavishly laid on, saves the life of his instructor at the cost of his own. But in general the aim is to be tough all through, and in simple, rapid and vigorous prose. There is much ramshackle invention but also a good deal of clever plotting in the interest of some sharp surprise.

Throughout his work, alike in plays, novels and short stories, the plotting is nothing if not boldly imaginative. Thus in a story called "Circumstantial Evidence" a chemist student who just happens to have a bottle of cyanide of potassium in his pocket finds himself studying the glass of a rich uncle who, he knows, has that day become, and who just happens to commit suicide by swallowing cyanide of potassium a few minutes later. We must not quarrel with such fabrications if we are to enjoy Wallace in a large way.

But his command of surprise is of a different order. One of the Sanders stories, "The Lonely One", turns itself brilliantly inside-out in its final eight words. In what is perhaps the best of the crime novels, *The Crimson Circle*, we follow, among other threads, the investigations of a certain Derrick Yale, a "psychometric detective", who can tell by handling a cartridge case that the man who fired it was suffering from toothache. The conclusion of this story, entirely convincing within the framework of its illusion, brings this absurdity to heel in a dénouement surpassing even the masterpieces of Rider Haggard.

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the passage at a desk which had been installed for a prime minister, granting in New York innumerable interviews judged of high publicity value, and soaking up all Chicago and its gangsterdom, the empire of Al Capone included, during a delirious visit of twenty-four hours. Back in England, and inspired by this revelation of a higher criminality, he had sat down and produced in four days a play called *On the Spot*.

Like Capone, its central figure, Tony Perrelli (played, through Wallace's astute choice, by Charles Laughton), operates in Chicago on a splendid scale. He has juries in his pocket and judges eating out of his hands; he owns five brothels with forty girls in each; the women with whom he himself associates say things like, "You can't respect a guy who ain't got the money to treat you right". Eventually he is successfully framed by a Chief of Police for a murder which is in fact a suicide, and makes "strange, beastly, terrified noises" as his fate closes in on him. *On the Spot*, unlike Wallace's horses, was a winner right from the starting-gate.

But now things were different. There had been family troubles and at least brief estrangements, too many failures in rapid alternation with the successes, and even to his optimistic view an increasingly clear picture of the hazards of squandering large sums of money shortly — or not so shortly — before earning them. And he was going not to New York or Chicago but to Hollywood, to work under totally new conditions when already in his later fifties. He had hesitated, deferred the trip, taken himself to Italy instead. "I am going to Rome on Thursday", he said in an interview, "to have a complete rest. I shall also visit Naples — just in case." And characteristically, lest the point of this subtle witticism should be missed, he had added, "Last week I had a touch of bronchitis, and I said to myself, 'I must see Naples before I die'."

Naples failed to come off, but in Hollywood he did eventually arrive. It was a brief up-and-down experience, with more downs than ups. They set him to contrive a "horror picture" and he got some way with what was finally called *King Kong*. But he was restless and ill at ease — and homesick despite the unexpected companionship of two English jockeys, Michael Beary and the famous Steve Donoghue.

There was a plan for his wife to join him in Hollywood, and he wrote to her constantly, exhibiting an obsessive concern over her movements in England and Switzerland. At the same time he had become romantically attached to a young American actress; she failed to keep a dinner appointment with him, a crisis developing. Drinking more wine, taking more heavily sweetened tea, and forced to face the fact that his health was deteriorating, he had told his wife to bring out with her a favourite patent medicine, and set his servant scouring the drug stores for others.

It was an inclement February, and his days were spent indoors in an overheated atmosphere. But after midnight on the occasion of the broken appointment he was found in his silk dressing-gown, pacing up and down the sidewalk in front of his house, still anxiously awaiting his guest's arrival. By the following morning he was very ill, and discovered to be an undiagnosed case of diabetes mellitus. Death followed swiftly.

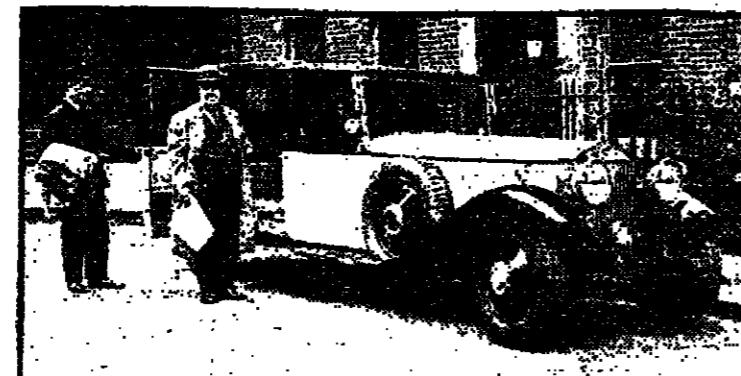
His body was brought back to England on the Berengaria, not the royal ship, with certain regality all the same. The liner, we are told, crept into Southampton Water with her flag at half-mast; the flags of Southampton slipped gently down to salute him; bells tolled in Fleet Street.

There was nothing unfitting about this. The Billingsgate street urchin had made himself the most widely read romance of his time — and not through mere facility, although that was abundantly there, but rather by unremitting labour of an almost superhuman order. Yet there was surely something a shade ironic about this mass-entertainer's end. See Hollywood and die.

He left very large debts but they were coped with speedily from the royalties that still came in. The books and plays continued to live on for a time. Some are alive still. There were films, including, of course, the immensely popular *King Kong*.

It was in a film, and posthumously, that his art received perhaps its strangest tribute. When Korda produced *Sanders of the River* in 1935 the role of Bosambo was undertaken by Paul Robeson — who had been playing Othello at the Savoy Theatre in the year Laughton was playing Perrelli at Wyndham's.

© J. I. M. Stewart 1982



Leslie Banks (left) and Paul Robeson in *Sanders of the River*.

David Pountney

whose production of the Flying Dutchman opens at the Coliseum on Wednesday



Front line

David Pountney and Mark Elder form the team of producer and conductor earmarked by the English National Opera to see the company through the mid-Eighties. But both have had to arrive at the Coliseum rather earlier than intended because of the sudden departure of Sir Charles Groves. Elder has been installed for some time now as music director, and Pountney takes charge of production in midsummer, a year before he expected to be in St Martin's Lane.

Next Wednesday there will be a foretaste of the partnership when the two men work together on the new *Flying Dutchman*. Wagner's early opera is not exactly the easiest one to begin with in this house because the image of the phantom vessel gradually filling the stage from the previous production by Dennis Arundell will be etched on the memories of regular visitors to the Coliseum. Pountney, though, reckons that theatrical taste has moved on since those days and that new language has to be found for appearances in 1982.

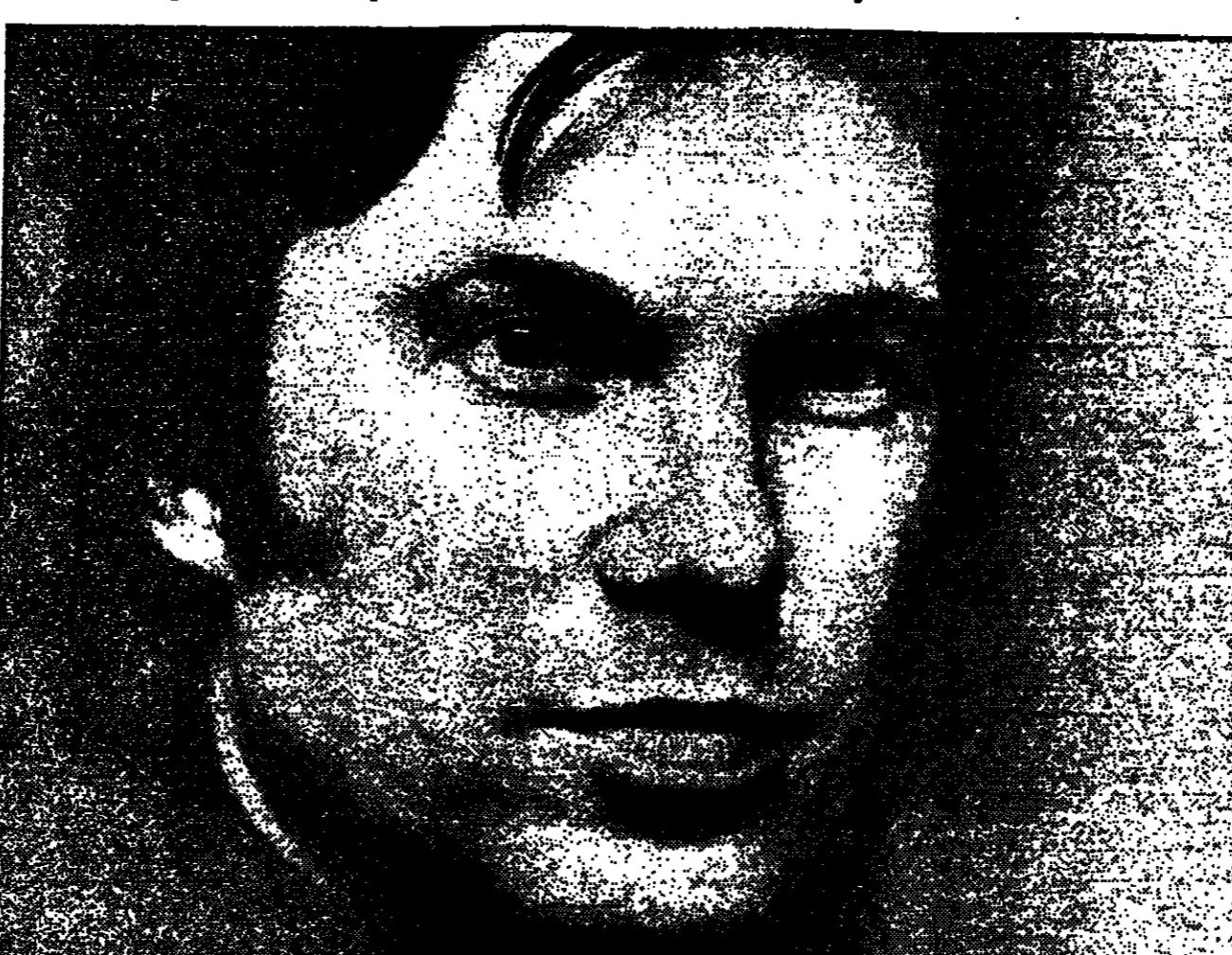
The *Dutchman*, normally a three-act opera, will be played at the Coliseum without a break, as Wagner originally intended, although those intentions were not observed at Bayreuth until 1901. It will come out at a little less than two and a half hours, a shade under the length of the average *Rheingold*. Nonetheless, one-act operas are unpopular with public and managements alike: when the curtain goes up the shutters come down on the bars, with a consequent loss in profits. Was

there any hassle before deciding on the one-act version?

None, according to Pountney. "I think the present Coliseum management is a little too high-minded to let commercial considerations interfere with artistic ones. Mark was keen from the start that there should be no division into acts because he wanted to emphasize the symphonic growth of the piece. I believe that playing the opera straight through must underline the contrast between the storm-swept, epic world of the Dutchman and the cosy domesticity in which Senta lives. Those who had to be persuaded were the designer [Stefanos Lazarides], because achieving the scene-changes without a break is not exactly easy, and Norman [Bailey, who sings the title role] will certainly be earning his fee every night. But we all feel that the raw energy and youth of the work will come over all the more powerfully by playing it in a single act."

Norman Bailey has probably sung in 20 different productions of the *Dutchman* before, including that by Arundell, while the Senta (Josephine Barstow) has sung in only one, which was in Dallas. Is this imbalance the greatest problem Pountney has to face or is it the pictorial magic on stage?

"Neither. Norman is a very flexible performer. And pictorial magic" is a matter of finding the right images, which are certainly not those of the pre-cinema age in which *The Dutchman* was conceived. When you are dealing with a piece of 'gothic horror', whether it is by Weber or Marschner or Wagner, you have to find your own language through which to interpret it. After that it is just one vast technical effort. Let's just say that the period will be 1840, that the visual impact will be highly romantic without using the traditional methods of romantic opera, and that we shall not be



using any cop-out of the 'It-was-all-just-a-dream' variety. No. The biggest difficulty is that the Dutchman and Senta scarcely ever address one another. And it is the movement between reality and abstract monologues that trails problems in its wake. The Dutchman, of course, wants somewhere to rest his head while Senta is all for getting up off her chair and going. I think we'll have to take a rather fluid view of the situation — no puns intended.

"Also, we've got to accept

the strong associations between Wagner himself and the Dutchman, the tortured being who believes himself excluded from society. It is this very association which lifts *The Dutchman* out of the gothic ruck. You keep turning the pages of the score and discovering Him."

Capital H?

"Wagner would have thought so."

David Pountney's contract at the Coliseum is for five years, which is just about the minimum time to allow

anyone to leave his imprint on a large opera house. There are one or two matters which need his urgent attention, including that of the opera ballet, which is one of the weakest elements in the house on the evidence of recent revivals. He will also have to decide how much of the Italian repertoire he will tackle himself; the Pountney reputation has been mainly established on contemporary opera and works from Germany and points east. "I've only dipped my toe in the great ocean of Verdi.

Macbeth, just the sort of opera, I suppose, that you would expect from someone associated with the East European repertory. If I had a blank page before me then I'd choose to do *Forza* or *Boccanegra*, but there are many other considerations, including what is in the repertory already and what Mark wishes to do. The only partnership worth talking about in an opera house is that between conductor and producer."

John Higgins

Radio/David Wade

Bloomsday to music

The co-production by Radio 3 and Radio Telefis Eireann of *Blooms of Dublin* (Feb 1), Anthony Burgess's enormous radio musical based on Joyce's *Ulysses*, faces me with two problems: first, I am only part way into a second attempt to read the book, the first having ended some years back in defeat of reader; second, I have never found myself able to take in a work of such size and complexity at one first hearing. So what follows can only be the early impressions of someone partially, if now I think more happily, acquainted with the original.

The musical begins where the book begins: before breakfast on top of the Martello Tower — though it takes some time to establish the location if you don't already know it; likewise it ends where the book ends: with Mollie Bloom's long reverie, or a part of it. Between these two points, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom wander through the business of the day that brings them together by an author's process of selection, truncation and elision telescoping the action while apparently preserving

enough of the landmarks of this odyssey to tie it to its origin.

Although before the half-way mark I had ceased to be able to relate the one to the other, I don't think this had much to do with a strong impression that as it went on the whole affair gained enormously in confidence, impetus and cohesion. The second and final act seemed to me to have taken off into assured independent existence as it swept through Bloom's visions of himself as emperor and the encounter with the formidable Bella Cohen: certainly I sat there in that state of bemused private attentiveness which is a peculiar effect of successful creative radio.

That this occurred owed much to a particularly attractive performance by Donal McCann as Bloom, one which projected both the Irishness of the man and those other traits he had from Palestine by way of central Europe. Burgess's music took several opportunities to point this up, although its predominant mood was romantic, sometimes to the point of pas-

tiche. Curiously I find its first hearing has left very little mark, as if it had served in some way as a vehicle for words and action and had subsequently disappeared.

This may suggest a kind of seamless quality to the production (by Michael Heffernan and Paul Murray as his directors) and to some extent that is perfectly correct. There were some very nasty joins in evidence however and they arose from a decision to give the singing and the speaking parts to different voices. It will be interesting to hear Frank Grimes's dry-voiced Dedalus suddenly replaced by Frank Patterson's lush, light operatic tenor. And often enough the singers and the speakers were in a different sound perspective, too. Where one actor sang and spoke (eg. Brian McGovern as Buck Mulligan) the effect was better. It would have been worth sacrificing some vocal technique and quality to achieve this throughout.

By comparison with Burgess's Joyce, attempts to translate your standard English classic into radio may

seem pretty small beer, although we have seen the job done so very well of late that the results take on lustre of their own. Hallam Tennyson's version of *Tom Jones* is one example. More recently Cherry Cookson's production of Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (Radio 4) succeeded splendidly in its adaptation by Jane Beeson. As a playwright Ms Beeson has a taste for situations of dire emotional misunderstanding or hostility leading to catastrophe and this may have given her the insight to produce such an affecting version of this early, semi-autobiographical work. It was good to hear Jeremy Irons's highly individual voice perfectly scaled down to radio. And there were fine performances, too, from Janet Maw, Michael Maloney and Nigel Stock.

Theatre/Ned Chailliet

Gandhi

Tricycle

Non-violence has always been more effective than its opponents could hear. Whether it was practised by Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, it provoked a violent end. Obviously it was not the weakness of the philosophy, but its success that led to the killing. When Gandhi was assassinated he had succeeded in freeing India from Britain's colonial rule, but the freedom he wanted for each person was the rule of self, and powerful Hindu forces blamed Gandhi for the partition of India and the weakening of their power. When he calmed unruly Hindus and Muslim factions with a fast that endangered his life, he was himself murdered.

Guernsey Campbell's lengthy dramatic portrait of Gandhi follows roughly that path, but it begins with a brief flaring of temper. Gandhi returns to his wife (Josephine Welcome) after two years studying law in England and says he would kill her if she has been unfaithful. She laughs and says he will never learn to curb his temper and that is what he immediately does. Miss Campbell then dramatizes his arrival in South Africa, where he is dumped off a train as an Indian, and shows the development of his organizational abilities before he returns to India, many years later.

Superficially the "evidence" seems inconclusive, but we have only examined technique. Like good claret, the bridge expert needs time to acquire maturity of judgement and experience. On the other side of the coin, both stamina and concentration decline with age. At 50, some players obstinately refuse to make ten tricks by a straightforward line. Declarer played a low diamond to dummy's 10 and East's 9. If East had returned a club, declarer could have succeeded by discarding a losing diamond, but East's return of a trump was less accommodating. The Declarer won in hand with the 9, cashed the 9A, successfully finessed the 9J, and played the 9K, ruffed by

the central figure of a Carol Burnett play, to judge from *A Silly Little Habit* last month and *Out of Step* (Playhouse, BBC 2) last night, is the neglected woman. In the first a lonely widow took to shoplifting as a form of excitement and confessed the pleasure it gave her to a school chum she had not seen for more than 30 years; in *Out of Step*, Valerie (Jacqueline Tong) was the sterile, 32-year-old wife of a boorish estate agent, clearly up to more than showing people round his houses on late evenings at the office. Valerie's excitement was competitive dancing.

The Burney woman is memorably blanked, on one side by the neurotic woman supposedly more fulfilled but in practice equally desperate — and on the other by the contemptible, self-emasculating male, a wincingly charming son in Valerie's case, a potential *paso doble* champion from the Abbey National with as much capacity for self-knowledge and connexion as a flake of dried haddock.

But Greg (Albert Welling) stayed sober, and Valerie, after her final miscarriage, had begun drinking, so when Rodney went to Australia and the stunning Cynthia became from Miss Creighton the School of Dancing (Gillian Raine) dished Valerie, grabbed Cynthia for the

championships and teamed her with Greg. Valerie declined steeply from Martinis to neat gin and was last seen sloshing it first into herself and then all over her bright championship-pink frock on the floor. Sad, certainly.

Miss Burney discards both pathos and absurdity in favour of unevenly, just as *A Silly Little Habit* eased itself from an unreal clash of generations into the more comfortable conventions of the old-fashioned matinee play (to be precise, *Black Clifton* by Lesley Storm) so *Out of Step* was more plausible when she allowed the relationships room to breathe than when she was relating the characters clinically to gadgets, goods and matters of taste. We knew, for example, that Valerie's fertile sister Linda (Carol Leader) was meant to have been corrupted by childbearing, not just because she was too knackered to stay awake to the end of *Knot's Landing*, but because she would even want to: a gratuitous, slightly priggish detail since Linda was dramatically alive and the scenes between the sisters among the best. *Out of Step* was described as a "rewriting" for television of *To Come Home to This*, seen last year (but not by me) at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. Directed by Bill Hay, all the women played well. To Mr Welling my sympathies.

Theatre/Irving Wardle

A monstrous dame

An Evening's Intercourse with Barry Humphries

Drury Lane

Dissatisfied customers might call this show under the Trade Description Act, as we never get a glimpse of the "widely liked". Mr Humphries, and as for intercourse, we get no further than what the evening's megalomaniac describes as a "spiritual massage parlour".

The programme, nevertheless, is divided between a session of "foreplay" before achieving its climax with the Dame whose command of British air-waves has virtually pushed Mr Humphries's own name into oblivion. The show runs to past formula with a set of routines by Mr Humphries's other creatures: a bloated introduction from Sir Les Patterson; presenting his credentials as Australia's cultural attaché with a soft-shoe number in co-resident football boots; a squeaky address from an alternative film maker; and a posthumous monologue from the eternal suburbite Sandy, sitting in a cobwebbed furniture depository, and confounding that when his widow holds a scrabble seance "I wanted

to give the glass a nudge, but I've never believed in the occult".

I am growing attached to Sandy, and even Sir Les grows on you like erisipelas. But these creatures do droon on, scoring up the odd giggle at the expense of "sparkling Tasmanian sherry", but not leaving much behind.

Edna is another matter: partly because she is not so much a joke against Australian pretension as against British collapse (witness her appearance at this address following her nights at the Albert Hall); next stop the Royal Opera House?; and partly because she has taken off with a monstrous independence that might well leave her creator feeling he is being eaten alive.

This time she arrives to fanfares in a gold-trimmed romper suit kicking outsize, bowing alley balls out of the way, exuding her own brand of deified banality. Always one for the common touch, she has a cheery word for the "paupers" in the gallery, and announces that she held out for Drury Lane as "I don't want my public stretching themselves... too many Third World people plucking at you in Shaftesbury Avenue and Molester Square".

The tide of satisfied, punning gossip pours on, much of it too fast to hear

Televue/Elkan Allan

No hiding place

The already anarchic video business has been thrown into even greater confusion by three new decisions, two from government bodies and one from its most powerful supplier.

The hardware end of the trade has been shaken by a pronouncement by the Inland Revenue that, contrary to the widespread assumption that travelling salesmen, journalists, doctors and others who worked unsociable hours could claim the cost of buying or renting a video as a legitimate tax deduction, there was to be no blanket permission of this kind.

"Business expenses must be wholly and exclusively for the purpose of the taxpayer's trade, profession or vocation", announced a spokesperson of the Inland Revenue.

While this is unlikely to deter a million of the people who are expected to buy or rent VCRs during 1982, it may seriously discourage the extra 750,000 in the professional middle classes, caught between the general acceptance of videos and the inroads inflation is making on their overdrafts.

Certainly the manager of my local Granada Rental shop, who has been using the promise of tax relief as his most potent clincher for wavering clients, will have to discard one of his strongest arguments for taking the plunge.

Meanwhile, the software side has been thunderstruck by a ruling from the Customs and Excise that, if sustained, will seriously affect many of the video outlets and postal clubs that have sprung up in such profusion that there are now more video shops than bookshops in Britain.

Many of these operate on an exchange basis. You buy your first tape for £39.95, keep it as long as you like or for a fixed period, and then exchange it for another one with a payment of £5, in a typical shop.

Up to now, the shop has charged VAT only on the £5 exchange fee, but the Department has written to the British Videogram Association ruling that retailers must collect the full VAT on the original retail price of a video cassette when an exchange takes place, and not just on the exchange fee.

So a shop or club will now be expected to charge not only 75p on the £5 fee, but a further £5.21p, bringing the total up to £10.96p, making exchange schemes absurdly uncompetitive with rental schemes, where the cassette dealer or — increasingly — the distributors.

In the meantime, the least it can do is to reverse the absurd ruling that VAT has to be paid on the original price of the tape every time it is exchanged. Motorists can exchange their cars as often as they like without having to pay VAT calculated on the price of the cars when new. If I exchange my vacuum cleaner for a more recent secondhand model I don't have to pay VAT on the cost of a new Hoover.

The reality is that the growth of video has caught the Customs & Excise, the Inland Revenue and everyone else by surprise, and they have not been able to react flexibly to the biggest new industry in Britain. Perhaps they do not believe it is here to stay. But it is.

Jazz/Richard Williams

Romantic horn notes

The lyric poet of the cornet, Ruby Braff has been among the most distinguished voices in mainstream jazz since that idiom's renaissance in the middle 1950s. His bewitched, blue-hour duets with the pianist Ellis Larkins were my first introduction to his work, many years ago, and I remain convinced that his best work is produced in the more intimate settings.

Braff can be found in Dean Street throughout this month, performing in a variety of contexts. On Thursday night, for example, accompanied by the Brian Lemen Trio, he was joined by the young tenor saxophonist who has earned large following for his studiously retrospective style.

Firstly it should be said that the quality of the rhythm section was by any yardstick thoroughly lacking. Lemon's unusually light keyboard touch does not preclude the bluesiness and, if one cannot have Larkins, is just the thing for Braff; a hushed, responsive beat was maintained by Jack Parnell, the drummer, and Len Skeat, the bassist.

An interpretation of "Take the 'A' Train" danced on tiptoe and a lusly mournful "Yesterday" found Braff at his best, alternating tricky sotto voce runs with Armstrong-style proclamations.

It had been said to me that Hamilton's playing is moving away from the weight of Ben Webster towards Lester Young's mobility, but there was little evidence of this in his literal reading of "When I Fall in Love". The trouble with Hamilton, I think, is that he is too conscious of his stylistic allegiances, and fails to dominate his material as a great improviser would.

Braff of course, dominates everything without seeming to flex the tiniest muscle. He is one of those rare improvisers whose every phrase seems worth preserving.

Arts Council OF GREAT BRITAIN

Bursaries for Composers 1982/83

The Council proposes to award a number of bursaries to composers.

Intending applicants, who must be resident in England, should write for an information sheet and application form, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope (approx 4½ x 8½ in) to Richard Lawrence, Music Officer, Arts Council of Great Britain, 9 Long Acre, London, WC2E 9LH.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR COMPLETED APPLICATIONS IS 12 MARCH 1982.

Travel/edited by Shona Crawford Poole

Destination	Nights	Company	Price	Save	Departures
SKIING					
Zell am Ziller	7 h/b	SkiScene	£150	£23	Mar 3
Austria	7 s/c	SkiScene	£109	£19	Mar 6, Luton
Cranz Montana	7 h/b	SkiScene	£159	£23	Mar 6, Luton
Switzerland	7 h/b	SkiScene	£149	£15	Mar 13
Madesimo, Italy	7 h/b	SkiScene	£199	£23	Mar 6, Luton
Val d'Isere	7 s/c	ClubMark			
France	7/14/1/b	Warmer	£199/307	£40	Feb 13
Courchevel, France	7/14/1/c	Holiday villas	£134/171	£15/19	Feb 13
Zermatt, Switzerland	7 s/c	Ski West	£121	£30	Feb 13
Courmayeur, Italy	7 h/b	Ski West	£150	£30	Feb 13
Val d'Isere	7 s/c	Ski West	£122	£30	Feb 13
Verbier, Switzerland	7 s/c	Ski West	£129	£10	Feb 20
Meribel France	7/1/b	Ski West	£219	£10	Feb 20
Selva Italy	14/1/b	SmallWorld	£199	£76	Feb 13
Selva	14/1/b	SmallWorld	£199	£60	Feb 20
Pontresina Switzerland	14/1/b	SmallWorld	£229	£70	Feb 21
Les Arcs, France	7 s/c	Erna Low	£65	£41	Feb 12 by coach
Les Arcs	14/1/c	Erna Low	£95	£38	Feb 12 by coach
Verbier	7/14/1/b	Ski MacG	£195/331	£43/20	Feb 13
Meribel	7/1/b	Ski MacG	£205	£43	Feb 13
Val d'Isere	7/14/1/b	Ski MacG	£195/299	£43/37	Feb 13
Val d'Isere	7/14/1/c	Ski MacG	£104/136	£15/20	Feb 13
Chiesa, Italy	7/14/1/b	Global	£104/150	£30	Feb 13
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WINTER SUN

Morocco tour and	14/1/b	Tjaerborg*	£219	Feb 19, 26 & Manchester
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Malta	7/14/1/b	Tjaerborg	£59/209	£36/43 Feb 17, Manchester
Madeira	7/14/1/b	Tjaerborg	£156	£15 Feb 25, Luton
Tunisia	7 h/b	Thomson	£157	£25 Feb 18, Glasgow
Tunisia	7 h/b	Thomson	£117	£30 Feb 10, Luton
Rome	7 b/b	Thomson	£116	£25 Feb 15, Luton
Salzburg	4 b/b	Thomson	£106	£20 Feb 19, 26 Luton
Malta	7/14/1/b	Portland*	£119/159	£32/40 Feb 12, Luton
Malta	14/1/b	Portland	£159	£40 Feb 13
Tunisia	7/1/b	Portland	£119	£21 Feb 12, Luton

Flights are from Gatwick unless otherwise stated. All discounts are calculated on current brochure prices. *May only be booked directly. Small World telephone 01-240 3233, Portland 01-388 5111 or 061-228 1188. Tjaerborg 01-499 8676 and 061-236 9511

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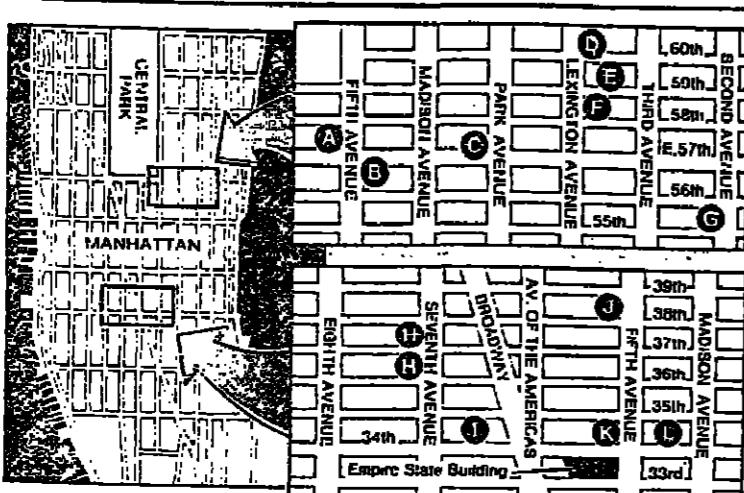
So Many Choices Please

—Doris Norden

* For a free copy of the delightful essay on Geneva together with our brochure on individualized vacations, write to: Twickenham Travel, 24 Hampton Rd, Twickenham TW2 7QZ, Tel: 01-896 6811, Telex 655455.

* Time Off Ltd., 2a Chester Close, London SW1X 7BU, 01-235 8070.

I NY Shoparound with Beryl Downing



A, Bergdorf Goodman. B, Tiffany. C, Hammacher Schlemmer. D, Cohen's Fashion Optical. E, Bloomingdale's. F, Alexander's. G, Manhattan Art & Antique Centre. H, Garment Centre wholesale buildings. I, Macy's. J, Lord and Taylor. K, Orbach's. L, Allman's.

The transatlantic shopper hopper

Where on earth would you expect to go shopping in an exotic bakery, buy cheese in an antique shop, which is where a lot of cheese should be, get vanishing tricks from the place where Houdini once shopped and buy a cut-price shirt on a Sunday, standing next to a king who had just slipped his bodyguard? New York, where else?

It's the maddest, baddest, saddest, gladdest place in the world to go for a three-day shopping spree, which is what I was invited to do last weekend, and as you can now do the whole thing, including hotel, for £240 return, it is the modern equivalent of popping over to Paris with one unbeatable bonus — everything's cheaper if you know where to go.

New Yorkers who do know where to go, work on the principle that God created the Gentiles because somebody had to buy retail. The places to try your luck are the wholesale offices in the garment centre, five blocks around 462 Seventh Avenue, and the jobbers in the same area — traders who buy up cancelled and unsold stock and sell to the public at less than retail prices. The best guide to names is a thick book called *Where to Find It, Buy It, Eat It in New York* by Gerry Frank, available in the city's main book stores at \$9.95.

If you are not quite so bare-faced about your bargains, the other place to look for discounts is the Lower East Side which, with Chinatown and Little Italy, were the first residential areas on Manhattan Island and the first stepping stone to prosperity for many an immigrant family.

Orchard Street is Mecca, but never on Saturdays, as the traders are mostly orthodox Jews. Go on Sunday morning to get the full flavour — and don't have breakfast. There are so many delicatessen you could do a beigel crawl all morning.

I have to admit that, much as I love a bargain, I find the atmosphere in these narrow, crammed shops tends to defeat the whole object of shopping in New York. Now that excellent American merchandise is available in London, much of the pleasure over there is in the ingenuity of the presentation. Moreover, you really do have to know when a bargain is not a bargain — when it has a famous label but last year's collar style, for instance. And really expensive items like furs were pretty much the same price as in London — or definitely not top quality. Alexander's, Lexington Avenue at 58th Street, would be a better hunting ground. Sundays noon-5pm, weekdays 10am-9pm.*

Hammacher Schlemmer, 145 E 57th Street, is the kitchen shop. New Yorkers wouldn't dream of going anywhere else for their precision clam openers, their ultrasonic rodent chasers, or professional blood pressure analysers, presumably for those who didn't have the foresight to equip themselves with battery operated food sifters — enough to give anyone the shakes. Not cheap, but fun. Weekdays, 10am-6pm.

Orca Cohen, though, at the end of Orchard Street at 305 Grand Street, is a paradise of percale and polyester — the discount store where in-the-know air hostesses buy their table and bed

linens. Famous name patterned sheets — Wamsutta, Marimekko, Bassetti — are all £25 each single, £6 double, £7.50 queen and £9 king; pillow cases £4.50 a pair. Solid colours start at £3 single. Fieldcrest Royal Velvet towels are £2.75 hand, £4.75 bath. I am roughly translating from dollars by dividing by two, but even with a fluctuating exchange rate, prices are still about 40 per cent cheaper than for the equivalent here. Sunday-Friday, 9am-5pm.

Macy's at Herald Square, Broadway at 34th Street, has the best department store selection of linens, if you don't feel like hitting the discount trail — all beautifully displayed and still at excellent prices. Two things to remember about American bedding — you often can't get valances (which they call dust ruffles) to match sheets — they tend to team with comforters, which Americans use instead of our thicker duvets. The other point is that sheets are slightly larger on all sizes, so you may prefer not to buy fitted bottom sheets if you like them tight and wrinkle-free. Sundays, noon to 5pm, weekdays, 9.45am-6pm.

Orbach's 5 W 34th Street and E. Altman, Fifth Avenue at 34th, are totally different cups of tea — Orbach's Quick Brew to Altman's Earl Grey. The former is middle-of-the-road fashion at middling prices, the latter is really rather correct, but it does have an entertaining autograph department with some unusual and interesting signatures to delight collectors. Sunday opening noon-5pm. Weekdays 10am-6pm.

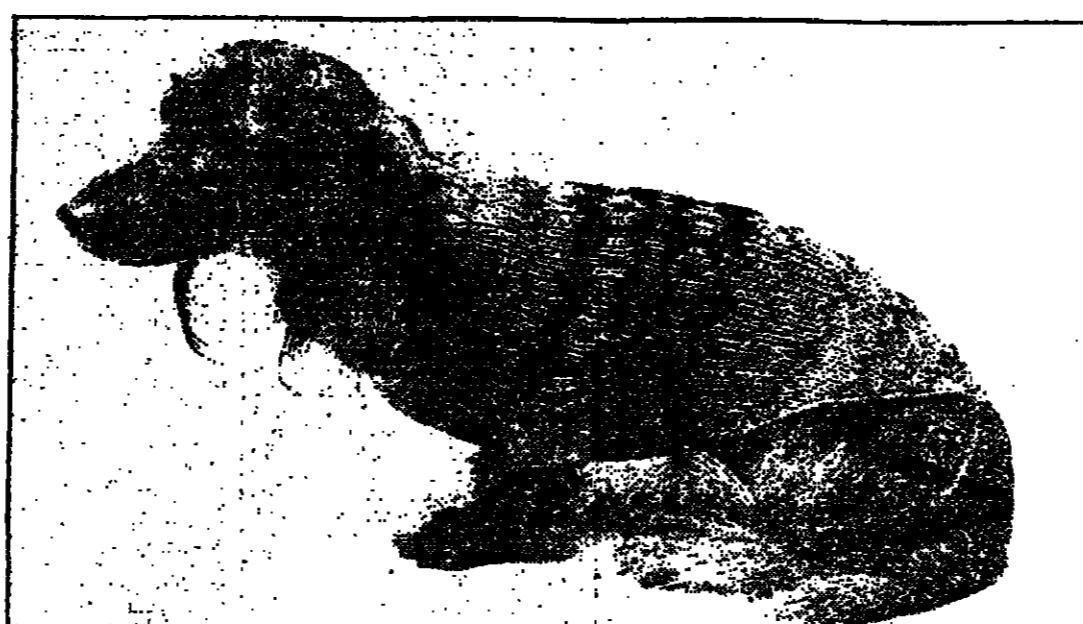
Lord and Taylor, Fifth Avenue and 38th, is worth a quick visit while you are in this area. It has a very good handbag department, although not cheap, and a rather gracious atmosphere that British shoppers will probably find congenial. Some Americans call it staid, but as it was the first store on Fifth Avenue in 1903 that is to be expected. To a child anyone over 50 should be amazed immediately and part-exchanged for a push-button model. Weekdays, 10am-6pm.

Bergdorf Goodman, further along Fifth Avenue at 57th Street, is very grand and very expensive, as you would expect from a shop whose corner is taken up by Van Cleef & Arpels, diagonally across the road from the place where Odgen Nash said really rich people get their tiffs — from Tiffany's. Top labels, top prices. Weekdays, 10am-6pm.

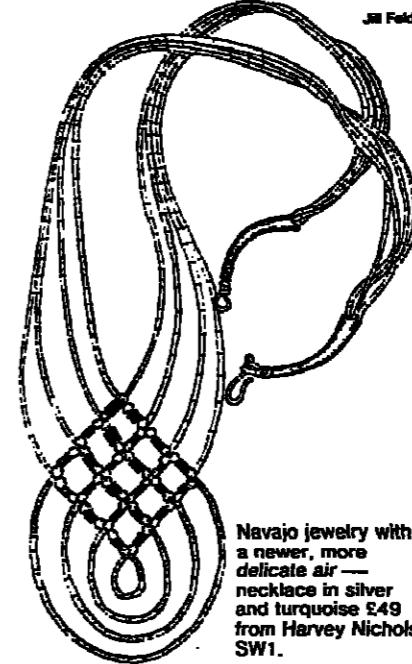
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America Burrall, 316 E. 70th Street, near Second Avenue, is

When God blessed America they hadn't invented jet-lag, but if you can't face crossing the Atlantic to do your shopping, don't give up — London is blossoming with new world design talent. Illustrated is a small selection to give you a taste of the flavour of the month.



For your puppy puppy — crazy canine coat in emerald fairisle, £10. Also in blue, gold, red or brown from Harrods.



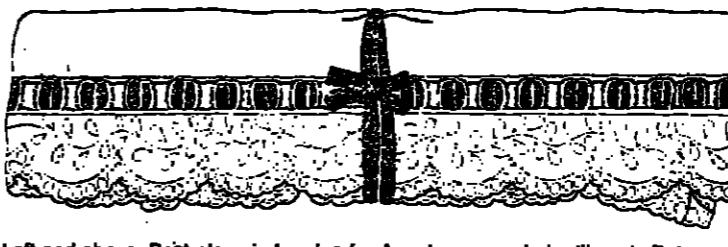
Navajo jewelry with a newer, more delicate style — necklace in silver and turquoise £49 from Harvey Nichols, SW1.



Sleekly packaged American score cards and pencils in a presentation carrier for bridge fanatics, £8.95. Also a "Chef's Special" version for cooks. From Heal's, Tottenham Court Road, W1.



Duncan M.



Left and above: Best place in London for American percale bedding is Between The Sheets, 190 Kensington Park Road, W11; which imports rolls of percale and broderie anglaise and will make sheets, from £19.55 single, duvet cases from £41.40; 4ft 6in x 6ft 6in to order. Ribbon threaded pillow shams, trimmed on all sides, £18.75 each, pillow cases £17.25 per pair, gift pack of four, rolled £35.75 (£1.65 pp) on most items. They also make up duvet covers to match designer patterned sheet sets — send your bed size and 25p and they will return sample swatches. Telephone 01-727 8768.



Opalescent glass scent bottles in swirling Tiffany colours, 3½in high by John Givex, New York, £25 each from Harrods.



American ceramic cats, £17.50, 14in high, £12.50, 8½in high, from John Lewis, Oxford Street, W1.

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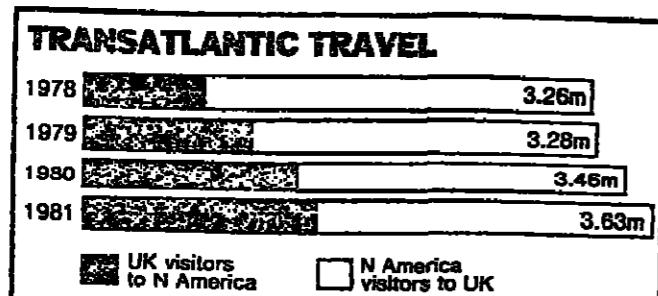
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BUSINESS NEWS

More go transatlantic



Although December figures for transatlantic travel, of which Laker has been accounting for more than 20 per cent, have still to be announced, there is expected to have been some increase last year over 1980, rising to about 3.5 million crossings from 1980's flow of rather more than 3.4 million. North American visitors to Britain, whose numbers had declined by 5 per cent in 1980, in the third quarter of last year edged up by 1 per cent over the same quarter of 1980. But the same quarterly comparison of Britons travelling to North America shows only a 6 per cent rise compared with the 27 per cent increase in 1980 over the previous year. Laker increased its carryings over the Atlantic by just over 14 per cent last year to 834,500 one-way passages.

Fewer US jobless

The number of unemployed in the United States, now at 9.2 million, showed a surprise drop last month. The jobless rate fell from 8.8 per cent in December to 8.5 per cent — the first decline since last June. But Labour Department officials said the January figures appear to be an aberration — due to fewer hirings of seasonal workers in December — and do not represent any real improvement. The figures revealed a big increase in unemployment among industrial workers.

600 more jobs lost

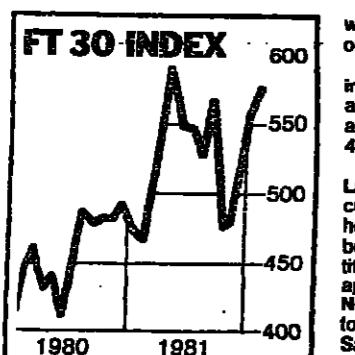
Another serious blow to employment hit Kent's Medway towns today when the Rochester engineering firm of Winget announced it is to close, with the loss of 600 jobs. The shutdown follows decisions to close Chatham dockyard, with the loss of nearly 7,000 jobs, and British Petroleum's Isle of Grain oil refinery, with the loss of a further 1,600 jobs.

\$1,000m Ford loss Steel warning

Ford Motor Company of the United States lost more than \$1,000m (£537m) last year, it confirmed during negotiations with the car workers union. Results will be officially announced in a few weeks. General Motors this week announced a profit of \$333m (£179m) for last year, although its operating account showed a loss of \$138m (£74m). Chrysler's results are believed to show a \$550m (£295m) loss.

MARKET SUMMARY

Laker boosts holiday firms



LONDON EXCHANGE

FT Index 578.8 up 3.3
FT Gilt 65.15 up 0.20
FT all share 329.93 up 1.21
Bargains 23,166

An air of optimism continued to hang over the market yesterday, despite the fact that Laker Airways had gone bust with debts of £200m.

The Government's apparent success in controlling public sector spending and the prospect of 10 per cent cuts in mortgage rates over the next few months came as good news.

Equities made further headway with the FT Index ending the second leg of the long three-week 3.3 up at 578.1. A rise on the account so far of 10.9.

Gilts were also in a cheerful mood, scoring further rises of 1% with the Government broker deciding against the announcement of a new tap sheet figure over the weekend.

However, with all this good news dealers were openly talking of a possible 1% per cent cut in bank base rates being announced next week — or at least in time for the budget on March 9.

Barclays Bank's new £100m 16 per cent loan issue opened up

COMMODITIES

Dealing in tin was inhibited by a bomb scare at the London Metal Exchange yesterday. The second ring and kerb trade were prevented, as morning trade was suspended while Plantation House, which houses the Exchange, was searched. Before this, a record high of £8,990 as covering and pricing operations continued in a market where the bulk of readily available metal is still in the hands of the operator who has dominated dealings for over seven months now. Dealers believed prices could have reached an even higher level if trading had not been stopped.

MONEY MARKETS

The Bank bought £401m. of bills on a forecast shortage of £400m. Its dealing rate was unchanged. Treasury bill rate at the weekly tender was fractionally higher at 13.57%.

Domestic rates:
Base rates 14%
3-month interbank 14%-14%

Euro-currency rates:
3-month dollar 15%-15%
3-month DM 10%-10%
3-month Fr.F. 15%-15%
\$384.25 down 25 cents

North Sea oil price cut by 1.50 a barrel

By Jonathan Davis, Energy Correspondent

The price of all of North Sea oil is to be cut by at least \$1.50 a barrel early next week, reflecting the current world oil glut and the weakness of oil product demand that has sent petrol prices tumbling all over the country. The move could cost the Treasury £300 million a year in lower tax revenue.

The British National Oil Corporation, which trades nearly two-thirds of all North Sea oil production, would not comment last night on its negotiations with the oil companies. But reliable oil industry sources confirmed the BNOC has offered to cut the price of its Forties crude — the official marker for North Sea oil — from \$36.50 to \$35.00 a barrel. Other North Sea crudes will also be reduced in price by the same amount and oil companies believe BNOC may yet have to concede an even larger reduction.

The move comes after intense pressure from the big oil companies. British Petroleum, Shell and Esso, who have been making heavy losses at their downstream refining operations. A reduction of \$1.50 a barrel would normally be expected to lead to a reduction in petrol prices of between 2p and 3p. But with petrol prices having fallen by about 10p since Christmas on average across the country, and more in some areas, the oil companies are unlikely to pass on the reduction to the motorist.

Cut in home loan rates forecast

By Lorna Bourke

A cut of 1 per cent in the home loan rate within two or three months was predicted yesterday by Mr Alan Cumming, Building Societies Association chairman.

"And I would expect a further 1 per cent cut in the summer," he said.

Mr Cumming admitted that there was room even now to reduce rates but that the societies were anxious to avoid a repetition of 1981 when the mortgage rate dropped to 13 per cent but then rapidly returned to its previous record level of 15 per cent, where it now stands.

The societies meet next week to discuss interest rates but they may well delay making a decision until after the Budget on March 9. Then the Chancellor will have revealed how much he intends to raise through National Savings — the societies' biggest competitor for funds.

"If the Chancellor is not too aggressive, we should have plenty of money to lend and we see no difficulty in lending it."

The societies are not concerned provided the Chancellor does not seek to raise the National Savings intake above last year's target figure of £3,500m.

Mr Cumming was also hopeful that the Chancellor might be prepared to raise the saving threshold for stamp duty from its present level of £20,000.

On the house price front,

Mr Cumming is expecting the market to be sluggish. "We do not expect to see anything more than a modest increase, and it is likely that any rise will continue to be below the rate of inflation. He pointed out that for the first time in recent years, homebuyers were paying a real rate of interest above the rate of inflation, but acquiring a property which was not keeping pace with the rate of inflation.

Smith St Albans rose 9p to 50p after receiving the go-ahead for its proposed rights issue, which was announced following losses of £20m or more from dealings in the gilt-edged market.

Tower Hamlets ended the day 5p firmer at 73p despite 1m shares going through the market, while another 1m were listed. Last Friday's 1p higher at 235p.

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FAMILY MONEY

SLASH YOUR TAX BILL

You can now eliminate higher-rate taxes by participating in a unique arrangement which attracts no tax charges on the proceeds of investment bonds.

The VERONICA PLAN enables you to take an unrestricted, tax-free income – and you can draw the balance of your investment, tax-free, at any time, without penalty.

Because the VERONICA PLAN attracts no liability to corporation tax, it can also be very effective for companies.

The underlying assets can be either a portfolio managed by your stockbroker or a selection of unit funds.

Minimum investment is £2,000, maximum £500,000. For further details, return the form below.

PLEASE SEND ME FURTHER DETAILS, WITHOUT OBLIGATION, OF THE VERONICA PLAN.

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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120 REGENT ST. LONDON W1

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MONEY TALK
Attractive rates for stop-loss insurance

FAMILY MONEY

Funds finding it pays to be backing Britain

Funds concentrating on British investments have made the best start in the 1982 unit trust league table. Indeed, such was the strength of the British stock market in January compared with its major overseas counterparts that less than a dozen of the first 300 funds in last month's performance list are predominantly invested abroad.

The overall leaders include a wide variety of recovery, smaller company and high income trusts. At this stage of the economic cycle, with the worst of the recession apparently behind us, income funds have a lot in common with recovery portfolios.

Yield requirements frequently necessitate managers buying cyclical stocks currently down on their fortunes or out of favour with the market. Over the past couple of years there have been plenty of British manufacturing companies falling into these categories.

Now with industrial recovery in sight or just over the horizon, the M & G management group recently described the domestic manufacturing sector "as the brightest feature in the world investment scene". Certainly, the unit trust group well anticipated the stock market with the FT Actuaries Industrial Group Index ending January at its all-time peak.

With its sizeable exposure to the manufacturing sector, M & G suggests that British yield-oriented trusts have most to gain from our industrial recovery: "These

Michael Hockings

Value of £100 invested over one month to Feb 1	
1. Craigmount Recovery	£116.0
2. Garinmore UK Smaller Cos. Recovery	£114.70
3. Target Income	£113.90
4. Intel Smaller Companies	£113.30
5. Britannia Income & Growth	£112.90
6. Britannia Nat. High Income	£112.20
7. S & P Income	£111.70
8. Fidelity Special Sits.	£111.60
9. Quilter/Quadrant Income	£111.60
10. Intel Income & Growth	£111.00

Source: Planned Savings Magazine
*net income reinvested — offer to offer price basis

Fighting for a fair share of the pension

The Government is acting speedily to change the laws governing maintenance after divorce. But one increasingly thorny problem — pensions — highlighted by the Law Commission in its report on the financial consequences of divorce, is unlikely to be tackled in the forthcoming Bill. This is a shame, for while the arguments for and against maintenance still rage, many ex-wives and ex-husbands agree over pensions.

Under existing pensions legislation, an ex-wife cannot claim any share in a widow's pension, though one may have a claim to any pension benefits on lump-sum death benefits if the trustee's discretion allows. With the growth of occupational pension schemes and the amazing sums of money involved in the public sector, a man's pension may be the family's biggest asset. Up-market divorces these days often involve an unseemly tussle over how, and how much, the ex-wife should be compensated for her loss.

Although the pension funds cannot, by law, recognise her claim to a part of a widow's pension, the matrimonial courts do. So compensation has to be paid out of the husband's share of current assets. This seems unfair as an ex-wife being shut out completely, particularly since the ex-wife might in any case predecease her husband.

Mr David Lindsay, senior solicitor to The Airways Pension Scheme, called for fresh legislation in a recent letter to *The Times*.

He says: "My pension fund, whose members include high-earning pilots on index-linked pensions, has come up against this problem. It is impossible to compensate an ex-wife for the loss of a widow's pension without leaving the husband with nothing. By law we are not allowed to split the pension. Even if we were allowed to, I would much rather accept the direction of the court".

The divorce courts have no powers over pension rights and payments in divorce settlements — they can only carve up the existing assets in lieu of them. So in many cases, a husband may be asked to transfer his half of the matrimonial home to an ex-wife to compensate her for some potential future loss. If the widow's pension could be divided by the courts or the pension funds for part of his pension on retirement in return for continuing payments to an ex-wife — or any other dependent — after his death.

Or he can take out insurance, if he can afford it. Commercial Union says that a reversionary annuity of £5,000 a year to an ex-wife, aged 46, on the death of a husband, aged 50, would require a single premium of £17,475 or annual premiums of £1,415.

Board, which called for a change as long ago as 1976.

At the moment there are two courses of action — neither really satisfactory — open to a husband who wants, or is required, to compensate an ex-wife for the loss of her widow's pension. Some pension schemes may allow him to forgo part of his pension on retirement in return for continuing payments to an ex-wife — or any other dependent — after his death.

Or he can take out insurance, if he can afford it.

Commercial Union says that a reversionary annuity of £5,000 a year to an ex-wife, aged 46, on the death of a husband, aged 50, would require a single premium of £17,475 or annual premiums of £1,415.

The Law Commission would clearly like this dealt with in the new divorce legislation. So would the Occupational Pensions

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? AS HIS EX-WIFE I DON'T RECEIVE A SHARE OF THE PENSION!



Smithie

Family Assurance report is expected soon

Investors in the Family Assurance Society can soon expect to receive the society's annual report and accounts for 1981. Following the upheavals last year, when the Registrar of Friendly Societies gave notification that he intended preventing the society from taking on new business unless changes were made, some investors may have been uneasy about their policies.

The 1981 accounts are due on February 17 and should be published soon afterwards.

"We have our fingers crossed

that most of the problems

that arose in previous years have been overcome," said John Clark, of Family Assurance.

He is hoping that the auditors, Deloitte Haskins Sells, will give the society a clean bill of health. The accounts had been strongly qualified in previous years by Morrison Stoneham, the auditors at that time, on the grounds that the society had failed to keep proper records.

Family Assurance has had

management consultants looking at their systems for more than six months and hopes that the book-keeping shortcomings have been rectified.

Trouble developed some time ago with the introduction of a computer system which appears to have been badly programmed.

This resulted in policyholders being credited with units in the investment fund even although they may not have paid their annual premium. This has been rectified and policyholders have been asked to pay arrears or have their policies made "paid up".

This over-allocation of units meant the fund being valued on a conservative basis, so it is possible that investors will see some improvement.

The Registrar of Friendly Societies has been keeping a close eye on developments and is likely to keep the assurance society on a short rein for a while. So it looks as though most of investors' qualms have proved un-

founded. We will know for certain when the accounts are published.

Meanwhile Ralph James, a member of Family Assurance, who was due to be co-opted onto the society's committee of management, has not been asked to take his place, and is taking the matter to arbitration.

Members of the society who attended the stormy annual general meeting last May voted in favour of Mr James being co-opted onto the Committee, but Mr James was advised by Bob Morris, chairman of the society, that the committee has decided not to accept the recommendation of the AGM.

Family Assurance is a tax-free friendly society with some 50,000 investors and assets in excess of £8 million.

Its affairs came under the spotlight a year ago when the Registrar of Friendly Societies called for a new independent committee management.

FAMILY MONEY MARKET

Banks

Current account — no interest paid. Deposit accounts — between 0.5 pc and 2 pc over the BSA recommended ordinary share rate depending on the term.

Regular savings schemes — 1.25 pc over BSA recommended ordinary share rate. Rates quoted by Barclays Other banks may differ.

Building societies

Ordinary share accounts — 9.75 pc. Term shares — 1 to 5 years, between 0.5 pc and 2 pc over the BSA recommended ordinary share rate depending on the term.

Regular savings schemes — 1.25 pc over BSA recommended ordinary share rate. Rates quoted by Barclays Other banks may differ.

Money funds

Since 7-day fund, 14.25 per cent; UDT Average Rate Deposit Fund, 14.25 per cent; Simon dollar fund, 14.68 per cent; interest paid without deduction of tax. Fund details from Simon (01-926 2333). Lyndal (0272-732241), JDT, now closed to new investments.

National Savings certificates

Current account — no interest paid. Deposit accounts — equivalent to an annual interest rate over the five year term of 10.5 per cent, maximum investment £10,000 or more rate fixed for the term. Fixed-term deposits — 1 month 14 per cent, 3 and 6 months, 13% per cent, 1 year, 11% per cent, 2 years, 10.5% per cent, maximum investment £50,000.

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Regular savings schemes — 1.25 pc over BSA recommended ordinary share rate. Rates quoted by Barclays Other banks may differ.

Finance house deposits

Fixed-term, fixed-rate investments of between 3 and 10 years, interest paid half-yearly without deduction of tax: 3-4 years, 13.1% pc; 5-6 years, 13% pc; 7 years, 13% pc; 8-9 years, 14 pc; 10 years, 14% pc. Further information from FFI, 91 Waterloo Road, London SE1 (01-928 7822).

Finance house deposits (UDT)

Fixed-term, fixed-rate deposits, interest paid without deductions of tax. For sums of between £5,000 and £50,000: 6 months, 14 pc; 1 year, 14% pc; 2 years, 14% pc.

Foreign currency deposits*

Interest paid without deduction of tax.

Interest paid without deduction of tax.

Call 7-days notice

US dollar 12% p.c. 12% p.c.

Yen (2 days) 2% p.c. 2% p.c.

D. Mark 6% p.c. 7% p.c.

French Franc 5% p.c. 10% p.c.

Swiss Franc 5% p.c. 5% p.c.

*Rates quoted by Midland Bank

— other banks may differ.

The snag, apart from the cost, is that if the ex-wife predeceases her ex-husband, the money is lost.

Margaret Drummond

LAST WEEK of initial offer

PERPETUAL GROUP WORLDWIDE RECOVERY FUND

A chance to be in the right investments as the climate changes.

The world in general is currently experiencing a very deep trade recession. In our opinion investments made now in depressed shares worldwide offer outstanding growth prospects. Indeed similar opportunities may not occur again for many years.

This is why Perpetual are launching their new Worldwide Recovery Fund — and launching it NOW.

Investment Objectives

The aim of the Fund is maximum capital growth. The Fund will be invested in a diverse range of companies around the world which Perpetual believe have exceptional recovery prospects due to the companies concerned having fallen on hard times or their share prices being in Perpetual's opinion unduly depressed due to a sector, a country or a particular share being temporarily out of favour with investors. The Fund is speculative and the risk/reward ratio is high so that performance could be volatile.

It is anticipated that the Fund's initial portfolio will be deployed as follows: Canada 5%, Far East 20%, USA 5%, U.K. 55%, U.S.A. 15%. The U.K. content will be biased towards companies having substantial overseas interests. Percentage allocations will vary at the sole discretion of the Managers.

Successful Management

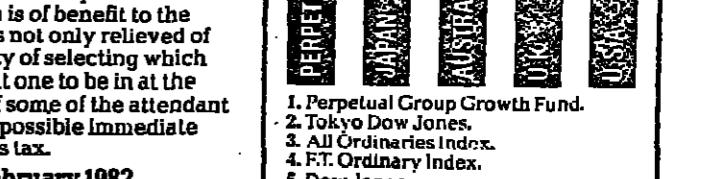
Perpetual manage only two other Funds — a Growth Fund and an Income Fund — and both have had exceptional records since launch. The Growth Fund has consistently retained its place as Britain's top performing unit trust for capital growth since launch in September 1974, while the Income Fund was the top performing income fund for capital growth in 1981. The average rise in the offer to offer price of our two existing funds over the year to 31st December 1981 was 25% net income reinvested.

Perpetual will be continuing their worldwide investment approach which has been a feature of their investment philosophy with their other two Funds. Perpetual consider this approach is of benefit to the investor who is not only relieved of the responsibility of selecting which country is the right one to be in at the right time but also of some of the attendant switching costs and a possible immediate liability to capital gains tax.

Invest by 12th February 1982

The minimum investment is £1000 and units are on offer at a fixed price of 50p until 12th February 1982. Simply complete the coupon below and send it to us together with your cheque.

You should remember that the price of units and the income from them can go down as well as up.



General Information

Units are accumulation units. Income is automatically reinvested in the Fund. The estimated gross commencing yield is 3% per annum. All application will be acknowledged and certificates will be forwarded by 30th April 1982.

To invest in the Fund you must apply in writing to the Manager. You will purchase them at not less than the minimum bid price on the weekly Subscription Day (Tuesday) following receipt of your instructions. Payment will normally be made within twenty-one days of the receipt of your renounced certificate. Prices and yield will appear daily in the Financial Times and the Daily Telegraph.

Perpetual Group Worldwide Recovery Fund is constituted and administered under the Trustee Investments Act 1961. Unit holders will receive on or before 1st April each year commencing on 1st April 1983 a statement showing the net reinvested income and the amount of income tax deducted.

An initial management charge of 0.52% on the issue (equivalent to 5% of the value of the units) will be made by this Manager until 31st March 1982. Thereafter a management charge of 0.5% (plus VAT) of the value of the Fund will be deducted from the gross income of the Fund. The Trust Fund permits a maximum annual charge of 1.5% (plus VAT) of the value of the Fund.

The Trustee Investments Act 1961 applies to the Fund. The Managers of the Fund are Perpetual Unit Trust Management Ltd, 40 Hart Street, Henley-on-Thames, OX9 9AZ. Tel: 04912-3868.

This offer is not available to residents of the Republic of Ireland.

Member of the Unit Trust Association.

Application for Units in Perpetual Group Worldwide Recovery Fund

Fill in the coupon and send it now to: Perpetual Unit Trust Management Ltd., 48 Hart Street, Henley-on-Thames, OX9 9AZ. Tel: 04912-6868. Regd. in England No. 115421 at the above address.

I/W wish to invest £ (minimum £1000)

In Perpetual Group Worldwide Recovery Fund at the initial offer price of 50p per unit. Offer closes on 12th February 1982.

I/W enclose a remittance, payable to Perpetual Unit Trust Management Ltd.

I am/we are over the age of 18.

Surname (Mr/Mrs/Miss)

First name(s) in Full

Address

Signature(s)

(Joint applicants must all sign and attach names and addresses separately)

Stock Exchange Prices

Confident mood

ACCOUNT DAYS : Dealings Began, Jan 25. Dealings End Feb 12. Contango Day, Feb 15. Settlement Day, Feb 22

5 Forward bargains are permitted on two previous days

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BUSINESS NEWS

ASSOC FISHERIES

Profits leap to £2m with state aid

Associated Fisheries, which has already been given almost £1m by the Government, indicated yesterday that it will need more state aid to survive without an EEC common fisheries policy. Lack of agreement over who can fish where and how much they can catch in the EEC pond has caused problems for the United Kingdom's owners.

Mr Kevin FitzGerald, Associated Fisheries chairman, said that without the government money its British United Trawlers offshoot would have made substantial losses in the year to the end of last September.

Instead, the aid was enough to help push Associated Fisheries pretax profits for the period up from £5,000 to £2m on a turnover £6m lower at £62.6m. The total gross dividend has been doubled to 2.85p with a 2.5p final and the shares matched their 75p high for the year before closing 3p up on the day at 73p.

Mr FitzGerald refused to detail how the company had managed such a large profits increase, but said he will explain how much Government money was given to the group and why its associated companies made a £108,000 loss this time against a £22,000 profit last time in his annual report, due on February 16.

He said the outcome of the present year would depend on the economy and whether the group could contain the problems of its trawling interests. A write-back of £1m worth of deferred taxation has given the group £2.7m to transfer to reserves against £438,000 last time.

Over the past five years Associated Fisheries has spent a lot of time reducing its dependence on shipping to

Advances led declines 483-249 among the 1,062 issues crossing the tape. Early big extent that now three quarters of capital employed is in on-shore activities. Over the same period pretax profits have gone from £1.9m to a loss of £2.9m in 1978 to £5,000 profits in 1980.

Mr FitzGerald told shareholders that the rationalization measures introduced in fish processing during 1979-80 largely averted a recurrence of that year's heavy losses and the group's financial costs were notably reduced as the result of a conservative approach to capital spending and working capital.

T M G GROUP

Losses continue

In the formal document dealing with the Dublin-based T M G Group's capital reconstruction and rights issue of convertible preference shares, the board reveals that heavy losses are expected for 1981. The loss, before tax and extraordinary items, is expected to be about £1.5m. Last extraordinary losses about £1m.

In 1980, T M G made a pretax loss of £2.7m, against 1979's profit of £2.56m. In the same year extraordinary losses of £3.81m were also incurred.

T M G's board explains that group borrowings have escalated to an unacceptably high level relative to the group's reduced size and its shareholders' funds; a significant amount of new capital is required to correct the imbalance.

P & S NEWSPAPERS

Costly dispute

The fall in advertising is still affecting profitability at Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers, publishers of 13 daily and weekly newspapers including the *Sunderland Echo* and the *Portsmouth News*.

Figures for the nine months to December show

only a slight increase in pretax profit from £2.3m to £2.4m. Turnover is up to £19.6m from £16.2m.

The group says the results are affected by the regional newspaper dispute which it estimates caused a loss of £500,000. Earnings a share are slightly up at 13.6p compared with 13.3p. An extraordinary debit of £96,000 is the result of goodwill written off on the purchase of shops.

A subsidiary, Portsmouth and Sunderland News Shops, trades as newsagents and tobacconists.

Income from investments is down at £86,000 against £193,000, though interest-receivable rose to £467,000 from £348,000. The company said the volume of advertising had been below expectation, especially in the northeast where high unemployment discouraged customers from buying advertising space.

Last year the group made pretax profits of £112,000 on sales of £2.3m.

BERTRAMS

Receiver called

Mr Douglas Watt, of Coopers and Lybrand, chartered accountants, has been called in as receiver at Bertrams, the Edinburgh company which makes machinery for paper and board industry and employs 130.

A series of losses at the company over the last few years is the result of severe contraction in the paper industry.

In a statement yesterday, Mr Watt said he was having discussions with the directors and senior staff on the trading and financial position. Until these were carried out, it was not possible to comment on the prospects for the future.

All avenues were being explored for the sale of the business as a going concern, but the situation had been explained to employees and union representatives.

Bertrams, which was founded in 1888, is 42.5 per cent owned by the McLeod Russell group.

WALL STREET

New York, Feb 5.—The stock market ended higher, although below its peak for the day, as attention focused on the money supply figures being released after the close.

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Irish and French provide bold rugby challenge

Solid beginning could help England to top of championship table

By Peter West
Rugby Correspondent

A distinctly anxious week for the English camp took a more cheerful turn yesterday when Peter Wheeler, whose back was injured at training last Monday, was passed fit to play against Ireland in the International at Twickenham this afternoon.

As it is, England will be faced with two showing two enforced changes and a different one as compared with that which followed 9-9 at Murrayfield. Jim Scottal, on his international debut, and Tony Bond, acquiring his first cap for two years, are the replacements at lock and centre.

John Scott, who will be playing only his third game of the season, has been recalled at No 8 to provide greater control at the back, to boot, a lineout and territorial and to renew what has always been a fruitful rapport with the captain, Steve Smith. Philip Blakeway, a redoubtable tight-head prop, has been restored to anchor the scrum, though the Scottal switch led to some disruptive wheeling.

If England's reconstituted pack looks less predictable than its predecessor, it may also have the claim to being the heaviest to appear in England jerseys. Syddall is a big man, 19st 10lb, Maurice Colclough weighs in at 17 stone and half, Colin Smart, Blakeway, Scott and Nick Jeavons at 16st 10lb. Colclough is the same height as Scott, while Jeavons is not more than an inch below him. The average weight is not much less than 16 stones.

In purely physical terms, then, England should have the means to win the set pieces, and no Irishman will be unmindful of the boasting the forwards received at Twickenham two seasons ago, when, admittedly, the England pack included Fran Cootton, Roger Utley and Tony Neary.

The rousing English effort, inspired by Beaumont, was achieved against an Irish side, seven of whom were unavailable through injury. The young lock, Donal Lenihan, had an especially fine game.

Old Belvedere are gone for a Burton

By Alan Gibson
London correspondent

It was a carefree Irish afternoon, with nobody quite sure what was playing where. Old Belvedere are a relatively new club founded in Dublin in 1930, and they were only the sixth time they had met London Irish.

They were ahead after two minutes when Farren, with a strong wind behind him, kicked a penalty from his own half. Ten minutes later, Feeney scored a try. It was a shambolic kick, used just previously his wing looked as if he had put a foot into touch. The referee, after consulting the touch judge, decided that the ball was down.

Old Belvedere continued to have rather the better of things but had scored no more by half-time. It was doubtful whether enough had been done with that wind.

London Irish gradually began to get on top. Maxwell missed a 10-metre goal but after 20 minutes kicked an easy one. Another penalty goal by Meanwell brought the margin to a point.

I was sitting next to one of the famous old warhorses of the province, Charles Burton, who easily said that whoever scored next would win. He was quite right. After 32 minutes O'Donnell dropped a goal and that was the end of the scoring.

I proposed to put in a word for the London Irish acting captain, Beresford, because he has such a nice wife. She managed to find the key to the only telephone box in the ground, although there was no one there. He explained that "it only needed a good kick". The telephone number, I was pleased to notice, was upside down.

London Irish won D. Weller; J. Ball; N. Murphy, A. McNamee; G. Horan, P. Enright; D. O'Farrell; G. McCarthy, T. Curran; P. G. Williams.

OLD BELVEDERE: N. Curran; K. Murphy; J. O'Farrell; D. Weller; N. Horan; J. Ball; N. Murphy; A. McNamee; G. Horan; P. Enright; D. O'Farrell; G. McCarthy, T. Curran; P. G. Williams.

Referee: B. Hockney; L. London.

Table tennis

Small step with a funny bat

From a Special Correspondent
Nantes, Feb 5

Jill Hammersley, English national champion a record seven times, took a small step towards creating further controversy with another combination bar. Mrs Hammersley began the defence her European Top 12 title with a 21-19, 21-16 win over Gabriella Szabo, the Hungarian who beat her in the last 16 of the World championships last year. And she did it with a similar combination bar to the one that started John Hilton cause the same biggest upset by becoming European champion.

Mrs Hammersley has usually played with combination bats before but this is only the second tournament where she has tried the combination of fast rubber and slow antiphase rubber with which Jill has caused such headlines and which has spread like wildfire among young players in England this season.

"It is the first time I have tried it out against the best players," she said, "in the German Open she gained revenge over Kirsten Kruger, the player I beat last year in the European Superleague. But revenge against Miss Szabo may prove to be more significant."



Peter Wheeler and the England pack take a breather from scrummaging practice.

Today's teams at Twickenham:

	England	Ireland	
M. H. Rose	15	H. F. MacNeil	15
M. Gibson	14	T. (Dundee University)	14
C. R. Woodward	13	G. (Queens University)	13
A. M. Bond	12	M. (Ulster)	12
A. S. Soden	11	P. (Belfast)	11
G. E. Davies	10	P. (Mary's College)	10
J. F. Sydall	9	D. S. Campbell	9
C. E. Smart	1	R. J. M. McGrath	9
P. J. Wheeler	2	(Wanderers)	1
F. (Llanelli)	3	P. (Old Wesley)	2
N. C. Jeavons	6	C. (Fitzwilliam)	3
J. F. Sydall	4	G. A. J. McHugh	3
C. E. Smart	5	J. (Shamrock)	4
P. J. Winterbottom	7	M. (Cork Constitution)	4
J. F. Scott	8	D. G. Lenihan	4
		J. (University Coll. Cork)	7
		W. P. Duggan	8
		(Cork Constitution)	8

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Racing

Take Bregawn to stay one step ahead of handicapper

By Michael Phillips
Racing Correspondent

Bregawn has the local selection to win the Goldfields Holidays Handicap steeplechase at Kempton Park this afternoon. Only if Michael Dickinson's much improved eight-year-old looks a trifle stale in the paddock beforehand, after two races in the fortnight, would it be wise to reassess the situation. In that instance I would turn to Night Nurse.

Dickinson clearly believes that Bregawn is alright, otherwise he would not have sent him on the long journey from Yorkshire. Against that backcloth, it is only sensible to take again with Bregawn while the race is still hot and before the handicapper has had the time to take his victories at Haydock Park and Doncaster into account.

Just the briefest of glances through this week's racing calendar show that Bregawn had already gone up the ladder 10 lb for winning at Haydock Park alone. Those races are in the future though, and as far as today's race is concerned, the handicapper's penalty of a point since then has not been applied. Since then he has won the Great Yorkshire Steeplechase at Doncaster.

When Bregawn won the Peter Marsh Steeplechase at Haydock he beat Night Nurse by 5 lengths. Now, was receiving 15 lb on Night Nurse then. Today the difference between the two is 20 lb.

Earlier in the season, Night Nurse gave Lesley Ann 10 lb and a four-lengths beating in a four-mile race at Newbury. Although David Elsworth's mare will be receiving an additional 2 lb from Night Nurse this afternoon, it should not be enough to affect the issue around a course as sharp as Kempton.

Night Nurse is her element somewhere like Cheltenham, where she won the Sun Alliance

Sprintchase last March and the Tote Double Steeplechase a week ago. At his best, Border Incident would be a very tough nut to crack with only 10lb. However, his trainer, Richard Head, was quick to point out yesterday that his old favourite has not had a race since "in the circumstances," he said. "I am certain that he will be all the better for the run."

As Royal Judgement's last outing was way back in October, it is only reasonable to expect him to be beaten out by Bregawn. He is clearly a force to be reckoned against the likes of Bregawn, Nightmare and Lesley Ann who must be as hard as nails after their recent activity.

Henry Kissinger beat Drama-

rit over a mile and a half at Kempton in a handicap again. In this case, the doubt is whether he will last three miles. He ran indifferent on the only occasion he was tried over that distance last season. There must be a fit of a dot, too, about Saint Vilain's ability to stay, because he is such a tressurer.

However, an abundance of stamina is one thing that the Queen Mother's runner, Special Cargo, does not lack. He won over three miles and five furlongs at Sandown Park yesterday. He would have won his last race in a bog at Lingfield had he not fallen at the last fence. Special Cargo was beaten ten lengths by Lesley Ann at Cheltenham last March and I doubt whether he is fit this afternoon to be sufficient for him to close the gap.

Like Lesley Ann, Lasson has also won the Sun Alliance Steeplechase but unlike her, he missed the whole of last season because of injury.

No matter how Lesley Ann fares, her trainer should, at least,

have the satisfaction of winning the Tote Hurdle with Heightin, who has a splendid opportunity to stone for his dismal disappointing performance at Cheltenham.

For those with one eye cocked on next Saturday's Schweppes Gold Trophy, it will be interesting to see Donegal Prince and Heightin run against Heightin, on infinitely worse terms than they will in Newbury.

Walnut Wonder, another Schweppes entry, is one of those to watch in the Spring Handicap Hurdle, which may be won by Kildrummy Castle.

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Heightin, whose brother-in-law, John Francome's brother-in-law, was a leading rider, David Rickards, it may be the most

careless preparation for the Champion Hurdle, of all races, yet it may also be just the thing to sweeten him," Winter said.

Bernie Rose has all the ability in the world, the brilliant style in a race at the National Hunt Festival last year by 30 lengths, yet a mind of his own that is so bizarre that he is good enough to take on all comers and then throw them one day rest to refuse point blank.

Al King, the winner of the first division of the February Novices' Hurdle at Kempton yesterday, is also Cheltenham bound. This was his first race under National Hunt rules and it sugars well.

Even Melody gained the 23rd win of his career in the Rutherford Handicap Steeplechase at Kelso yesterday. Press Association reports. Glyn Howells took the 13-year-old out of his local track at Wetherby, the Yorkshire trainer has an outstanding chance or landing a treble with Political Pop, Rathgorman and Tommy Joe.

Political Pop runs in the Selly Park Chase at Wetherby tomorrow.

This improving eight-year-old has not

been seen in public since

finishing second to Diamond Edge in the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup at Newbury back in November. That was first-class performance as after 30 lengths he would have been beaten by a long head. Shady Deal, who finished fourth that afternoon, and Sunset Cristo appeared the only dangers.

Rathgorman will be out to

record his fifth victory over Wetherby's two miles in the

Champion Hurdle tomorrow.

Rathgorman is almost unbeatable

on his day, and seems to find the

long straight of the Yorkshire

stays well.

Neville Crump, who has always

trained Even Melody, said: "He's

a lovely old horse. In the days of

he would have earned 12lb. 7lb.

He would be 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and

4th. I think he'll be 1st this lot, but he's getting on a bit

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Today's events

Exhibitions

Drawings and watercolours by Joseph Crawhall, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, Kelvin Grove, Glasgow, 10 to 5.

Paris sans Fin: lithographs by Alberto Giacometti, Printmakers Workshop, Edinburgh, 10 to 5.30.

Circus exhibition, Ipswich Museum and Gallery, High Street, Ipswich, 10 to 4.45.

Japanese festivals — exhibition for children about Japanese life traditions, Haggis Castle Museum, 10th St Andrews Drive, Glasgow, 10 to 5.15.

Cum bimotronic prints by Paul Harrison, 4 to 6; and work by John Harper, 12 to 4 and 6 to 9; Chapter's Gallery, Market Road, Cardiff, Cardiff.

Music

Concert by City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham Town Hall, Birmingham, 7. Concert by the Scottish Early Music Consort, St Andrews, 8.

Last chance to see

Bird art exhibition, Royal

Cousin Academy, Edinburgh, 10

p.m.

Concerts

Paintings by Elizabeth Blackadder, National Museum of Wales, Main Building, Cathays Park, Cardiff, 2.30 to 5.

Photographer as printmaker, University, Nottingham, 10

4.45.

Prints by Ceri Richards, Ulster

Museum, Botanic Gardens, Bel

fast, 2 to 5.

Drawings and prints of the

romantic period, 1790-1840,

Ast

molean

Museum, Oxford, 2 to 4.

Paintings by David Weston,

Albert

Drive, Glasgow, 2 to 5.

Rail

Run down of British Rail ser

vices because of tomorrow's

strike by Aslef drivers

tonight: passengers should aim

to reach stations by 10 p.m.

No overnight trains No very early

trains on Monday.

Talks, lectures

A closer look: Constable's The

Leaping Horse, by Eileen Graham,

3.30; and European wood

sculpture by Malcolm Baker, 3.30;

both at Victoria and Albert

Museum.

Four centuries of British land

scape interpretations by Laurence

Bradbury, 3; and painting of the

modern, J. R. Turner, Turner

Storm: Hanibal and his Army

crossing the Alps, 2.30-2.45; both

at Tate Gallery.

MUSIC

Gala performance by past stu

dents of the Guildhall School of

Music and Drama, Sadler's Wells

Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, EC1, 7.30.

Children's concert with Steven

Jewell (cello), Llandafford House,

Waterton Park, NW, 5.

Last chance to see

Practical Woodworking Exhibi

tion, Wembley Conference Centre,

10 to 6.

Walks

Picturesque Hampstead village

and the Heath, meet Hampstead

Underground, 11.

Kristin: Highgate vil

lage and woodland, meet Arch

way underground, 2.30.

A Dickens' 170th birthday walk,

meet St Paul's Underground, 11.

Discovering London—Mayfair,

Meet Green Park Underground, 2.

3pm, East End Murders, 2.30,

Regent House, 283 Gt. Portland St, London, EC1A (01-533 3355 or 01-200 0200).

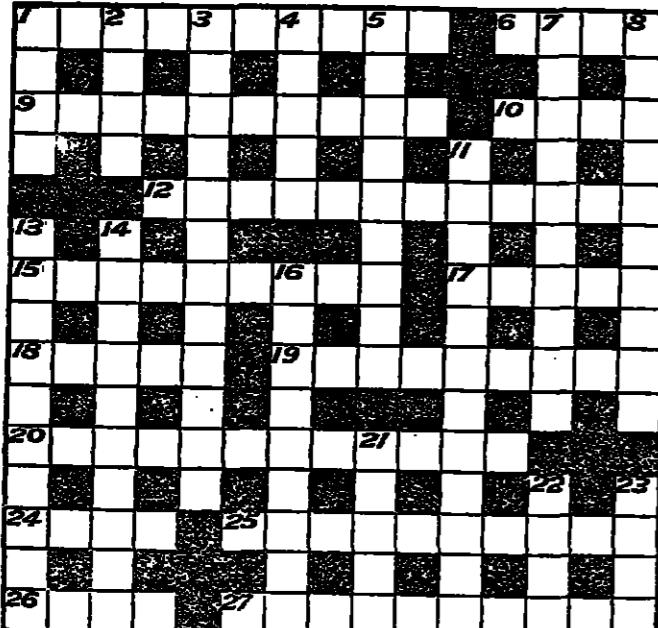


The Times Crossword Puzzle No 15,749

A prize of The Times Atlas of the World (comprehensive edition) will be given for the first correct solution opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, 12 Coley Street, London WC3N 9TY. The winner and solution will be published next Saturday. The winner of last Saturday's competition is Mr F. Driver, 58, Eccleson Square, London SW1Z.

Name _____

Address _____



ACROSS

DOWN

- 1 Stiffs — with this? (6-4).
- 2 Commercial turned up very loud (4).
- 3 V.I.'s a warning weapon (3-7).
- 4 Country lacking a prominent feature (4).
- 5 Orton embraces animal friend, rightly (12).
- 6 Confusion when one thousand trains are given fuel to go backwards (9).
- 7 Go in for chips, but no fish (5).
- 8 South coast resort student's poor accommodation (5).
- 9 Plots against king circumvented by agents (9).
- 10 Ungainly youths limped badly — Oh yes? (12).
- 11 One without a heart found in this state (4).
- 12 Revive and create pure havoc (10).
- 13 Boy in a whirl (4).
- 14 Help when one's rejected position (10).
- 15 Stiffs — with this? (6-4).
- 16 For clarity, include different points (9).
- 17 Taking time over one's beauty... (5).
- 18 ...with husband around, one might (4).
- 19 Nothing but water (4).

We apologise for two misprints in early editions yesterday. The word "in" in clues 2 down and 24 down should have been "on".

Weekend travel

Pre-arranged travel information on Traveline—Rail : 01-246 8030. Road : 01-246 8031; Sea : 01-246 8032; Air : 01-246 8033.

Laker Airways said last night it was impossible as yet to advise booked passengers what to do now, or whether they would be able to get away on other operators' flights. Passengers should remain in touch with their travel agents or telephone 01-688 9363 for information.

British Caledonian is to reprice its available British Caledonian flights to passengers stranded in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Tickets on British Caledonian flights between London Gatwick and Atlanta, Houston, Dallas or Ft Worth and St Louis will be provided on a space available basis, on presentation of the passenger half of a Laker Airways North Atlantic scheduled service ticket.

For further information telephone Gatwick (0293) 25555.

British Airways, BA and Air Florida are also offering to assist stranded passengers.

Rail

A run down of British Rail services because of tomorrow's strike by Aslef drivers tonight: passengers should aim to reach stations by 10 p.m. No overnight trains No very early

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Flights

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The papers

The Daily Mail, mourning for Sir Fredrick Laker, commented yesterday that it is difficult to overlook the gravity attitude of the financial establishment of the City of London which could have saved him without straining overmuch either its resources or its principles

The risk takers like Sir Freddie will give capitalism a good name to them only an embarrassment. They will surely live to regret it. Sir Fredrick's failure to come to the aid of one who has done so much to popularise the free market system by which they live," it says.

The London Standard wrote last night that the best friends Sir

Freddie has won for ordinary travellers will not be lost.

They will never be forgotten by his legion of admirers."

The Washington Post said that

President Mubarak of Egypt was

on the right track in demanding that an autonomy agreement that an autonomy agreement

be reached between the PLO and the

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